

Orchestral Conductor Training: An Evaluative Survey of Current International Practice at the Tertiary Level

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation is the outcome of a research investigation into the training of orchestral conductors in tertiary music institutions around the world.

The project analyses the conducting programs of seven leading tertiary-level schools and searches for the reasons for their success. The analysis has involved examining the practical, structural aspects of different curricula, as well as engaging with the philosophy behind the teaching methods used. In examining a broad cross section of successful international schools with varying pedagogical methods a deeper understanding of the key ingredients for successful conductor training has been obtained.

New primary source materials have been generated in the form of interviews with leading pedagogues, including Jorma Panula, Leif Segerstam, Alexander Polishchuk, Mark Stringer, Johannes Schlaefli, Kenneth Kiesler, Christopher Seaman, John Carewe, James Ross and Markand Thakar. These interviews were carried out by the author and were recorded in Finland, Russia, the United Kingdom, Austria, the United States, and Australia. Quotations from the transcripts of these recorded interviews are used extensively throughout the thesis and form the basis of much of the argument.

The thesis is structured in three parts. Following an introduction and literature review, Part One identifies and investigates the main challenges facing a conducting program and discusses the responses to these challenges by leading pedagogues. Part Two consists of a detailed examination of the curricula and processes of seven leading international tertiary level conducting programs, and identifies the unique features of their respective approaches. Part Three presents comparisons and deductions based on the research presented thus far, and outlines areas that are currently neglected and in need of further research. A detailed proposed course structure for a world-class conducting program for implementation in a tertiary institution is then presented.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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Luke Dollman

Date: 18 December 2013

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Introduction

A technique of conducting does exist and can be learnt and practised down to its smallest details before a student first attempts to conduct an orchestra.

– Hermann Scherchen

What one can teach and what one can learn are so minimal that I could explain it to you in a minute.

– Otto Klemperer

The quotations above, coming as they do from two towering figures in the history of orchestral conducting, capture well the divergent views that the current study seeks to address. For Hermann Scherchen, there is a clear and detailed path of learning available to the student of conducting.¹ Whereas for Otto Klemperer, all that can be imparted on the subject can be done so in the space of a minute.²

That such contrasting opinions exist is in part due to the complexity of the art form. A conductor must have the requisite musical education to be able to read and interpret a complex musical score, and possess the physical presence and technique to be able to communicate that interpretation to the musicians of an orchestra. The conductor should hear precisely the sounds the orchestra produces, analysing them instantaneously, and then be

¹ Hermann Scherchen, *Handbook of Conducting*, trans. M.D. Calvocoressi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 4.

² Peter Heyworth, *Conversations with Klemperer* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1973), 86.

able to rehearse the orchestra efficiently and effectively. This requires not only high level musical and organisational skills, but personal and social skills as well.

Thus, with such a broad range of skills required, the question has arisen as to whether the art of conducting in its highest form is indeed teachable, and therefore, whether training in an academic setting is of any real benefit to the student who aspires to conduct professionally.³ Nevertheless, the second half of the twentieth century saw a proliferation in conducting courses being taught at the tertiary level.⁴ Despite this expansion of activity and the challenges involved in training conductors, little research has been done investigating and comparing the various strategies adopted by schools internationally, and it is this gap which the present study aims to address.

The thesis identifies some of the world's most successful tertiary schools in the field of advanced orchestral conductor training, and analyses their methods and philosophies in order to better understand the reasons for their success. It is hoped that by doing so, a clear picture of what constitutes current international best practice in orchestral conductor training can be established, and directions for future development can be identified. An ideal curriculum is proposed, suitable for implementation in a variety of tertiary settings, based on the findings of the research. Within this context, the question of 'can conducting be taught?' is re-examined, and an assessment presented of where conducting pedagogy currently stands in relation to it. To date, no study has taken a broad, international view of the leading tertiary conducting programs of the world and detailed their activities. Additionally, no previous study has attempted to identify the challenges involved in delivering conducting programs at this level, or discussed potential solutions to these problems.

Serving as a background to the thesis are my years working as an orchestral conductor on the international circuit, and prior to that, my own formative years as a student of conducting at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Aspen Music Festival and School, and Symphony Australia's conductor development program. Ever since my first conducting

³ Carl Bamberger, *The Conductor's Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 202.

⁴ Alan Lee Baker, *Creating Conductors: An Analysis of Conducting Pedagogy in American Higher Education* (DMA thesis, Stanford University, 1992), iv.

lesson some twenty years ago, I have been fascinated by the various approaches and philosophies adopted in the pursuit of teaching this, at times, elusive art form. As time has passed I have become increasingly active as a teacher of conducting, and thus have had to confront many of the challenges discussed in this thesis myself. As such, this study is conducted from an insider's perspective.

It must be remembered that the concept of the conductor as we know it is a relatively new one in the context of musical history, having only come to be embraced fully in the twentieth century. Whilst the pedagogies of many instruments have developed over hundreds of years, conducting pedagogy is still a relatively new concept, and therefore is at an earlier stage of development. Due to the conductor's rapid rise to a level of prominence in the world of classical music, it is all too easy to forget this fact. As such, a brief overview of the development of conducting is useful in placing it in its correct historical context.

- **Historical Perspective**

Whilst the antecedents of conducting may be traced as far back as 1500 B.C.,⁵ the story of the development of modern conducting begins in the nineteenth century. According to Adam Carse:

In the year 1800 it would have been difficult, or even impossible, to find any orchestra in which the playing was controlled by a musician who did nothing but beat time and indicate by gestures how the music should be interpreted.⁶

In the previous century, the musical direction for a performance had normally come from either the concertmaster or the continuo player, the continuo player often being the composer himself. However, over the course of the 19th century the demands of music making and the growth of the orchestra made the presence of an extra musician to keep

⁵ Elliott W. Galkin, *A History of Orchestral Conducting: In Theory and Practice* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1988), 241.

⁶ Adam von Ahn Carse, *The Orchestra from Beethoven to Berlioz: A History of the Orchestra in the First Half of the 19th Century, and of the Development of Orchestral Baton-Conducting* (Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1948), 289.

things in order and provide musical direction a necessity. This was a gradual process and initially concertmasters and keyboardists would simply beat time where necessary and then return to playing their instrument. The composer Louis Spohr was one such musician who began his career leading from the concertmaster's chair. However, during his time as Kapellmeister at the Frankfurt Opera (1815-1817), he often dispensed with his instrument and began conducting with a baton in front of the orchestra.⁷ Several other composers soon followed suit, including Weber, Spontini and Mendelssohn. When Mendelssohn took over the famous Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1835 he quickly dispensed with the tradition of the concertmaster as director and conducted with a stick. This was not altogether popular though, as Schumann wrote of one of their concerts:

For my part I dislike the conductor's stick in the overture as in the symphony... the orchestra should stand like a republic in a symphony, refusing to acknowledge a superior.⁸

Despite these initial misgivings, Schumann would later conduct his own symphonies, albeit with mixed success.⁹ By 1850 some form of time-beating was quite common, though the concept of the conductor as we know it had not yet arrived, as it was not seen as a role which required specialisation and was primarily seen as a way of keeping a performance together.

Where possible, the conductor was the composer himself. Hector Berlioz often took to the podium himself to conduct his compositions, and was one of the first to define the role of the modern conductor in writing. In 1856 he wrote:

The conductor should see and understand; he should be agile and vigorous; he should know the composition he conducts and the nature and extent of the instruments, he should know how to read a score, and should possess, in addition to the special talent and the constituent qualities we are about to explain, others which are almost indefinable, and without which an impalpable barrier arises between him and those whom he directs, the faculty

⁷ Carse, 299.

⁸ Carse, 305.

⁹ Carse, 363.

of transmitting to them his feelings is denied him, and therefore power and authority, the directive action, completely escapes him.¹⁰

It is remarkable that these comments were made when the art form was still in its infancy, and yet, they still ring true over 150 years later. One of the most dominant examples of the composer/conductor in the second half of the 19th century was Richard Wagner, who took composition, the orchestra, and the nature of music drama itself to new heights. Due to the relatively free nature of his works, there was no longer any question of whether a conductor was required or not – it was an absolute necessity. Hence, the concept of the conductor as specialist began to emerge, the most famous practitioners being Hans von Bülow, Arthur Nikisch and Hans Richter.¹¹ This was the beginning of the end of the composer/conductor being the norm. According to Elliott Galkin:

When Wagner relinquished his baton to Richter in 1877, his act symbolized a transformation in the practice of conducting which was confirmed during the final quarter of the nineteenth century: by 1900, Kapellmeister-conductors, ie composer-conductors as exemplified by Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss and Sergei Rachmaninoff typified a waning tradition.¹²

Thus, the twentieth century had arrived, and with it the new profession of the conductor.

With conducting now a recognised practice in its own right, the issue of how to become a conductor arose. The idea of actively training conductors was slow to come about, it being assumed that conductors should simply learn by first-hand experience. In 1887 aspiring American conductor Walter Damrosch wrote to Hans von Bülow asking for lessons. Von Bülow, who was also a renowned pedagogue of the piano, was surprised by the request. He replied, ‘In what way do you conceive that your wish can be fulfilled?’¹³ Gradually, however, the idea of teaching some of the basic elements of conducting emerged. We know, for

¹⁰ Hector Berlioz, *The Conductor, The Theory of his Art*, trans. John Broadhouse (Michigan: Scholarly Press, 1970), 5.

¹¹ It should be noted that Hans von Bülow remained well-known as a pianist, in addition to his activities as a conductor.

¹² Galkin, 583.

¹³ Alan Walker, *Hans von Bülow: A life and times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 346.

example, that Hans Pfitzner taught a conducting class as early as 1905 in Berlin,¹⁴ and Vincent d'Indy began teaching a conducting class in Paris in the same year.¹⁵ These early attempts at formalising conductor training spread only gradually throughout Europe. In 1909, Franz Schalk was appointed to lead a conducting program at the Hochschule in Vienna, and in 1919, Adrian Boult began teaching conducting at the Royal College of Music in London.¹⁶ However, very little source material has been uncovered detailing what form these early conducting classes took, and in what context they were administered. We can assume from the writings of people such as Hermann Scherchen that any conductor training that did take place in the early part of the twentieth century was of a fairly rudimentary level by today's standards.¹⁷ In America, conductor training seems to have become something worthy of including in tertiary syllabi around the beginning of the 1930s. One particularly notable appointment was that of Fritz Reiner as Director of Orchestral Studies and Conducting at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia in 1931.¹⁸ However, it was not until after the Second World War that the formal education of conductors flourished, with some form of training becoming the norm at universities worldwide. As such, the beginning of the twenty-first century seems to be an appropriate time to look back over this period and assess the strengths and weaknesses of various programs and approaches that have developed throughout the world, and to assess whether conducting can indeed be taught.

- **The role of the conductor**

In order to teach conducting, the role of the conductor, and hence the skills and qualities he or she should possess, need to be defined. Due to the complexities of the job, this in itself is

¹⁴ Peter Heyworth, *Otto Klemperer: His Life and Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 20.

¹⁵ Harold Farberman, 'Training Conductors' in José Antonio Bowen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 251.

¹⁶ Farberman, 251.

¹⁷ Hermann Scherchen, *Lehrbuch des Dirigierens* (Mainz: Schott, 1929).

¹⁸ Kenneth Morgan, *Fritz Reiner, maestro and martinet* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 66.

not a straightforward task, as Nikolai Malko, one of the great conducting pedagogues points out:

Conducting is the most complicated and the most difficult form of musical performance. One psychologist has in his lectures referred to conducting as the most complicated of psycho-physical activities, not only in music but in life in general. Be that as it may, conducting has been formulated upon a basis of theoretical analysis less than any other musical activity.¹⁹

Whilst the movements a conductor makes may seem relatively straightforward to the casual observer, this is merely the external, visible manifestation of the many complex internal processes that occur both in the moment of performance, and during the period of preparation for a particular work. To learn a score thoroughly and develop a musical vision of a piece, a conductor should have a wide array of knowledge, skills and abilities at their disposal. American composer/conductor Gunther Schuller identifies the varieties of skills and abilities a conductor requires as:

...physical/gestural, aural, analytical, intellectual – even psychological and philosophical. For the conductor must not only know all there is to know about a score, down to the most minuscule details, but must develop the gestural skills to transmit that information clearly to an orchestra and the psychological dexterity to relate effectively (especially in rehearsals) to an orchestra...²⁰

In order to be able to lead a professional orchestra successfully, an extraordinarily broad set of skills and attributes are required, as illustrated in Figure 1.

¹⁹ Nikolai Malko, *The Conductor and his Baton* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1950), 11.

²⁰ Schuller, 3.

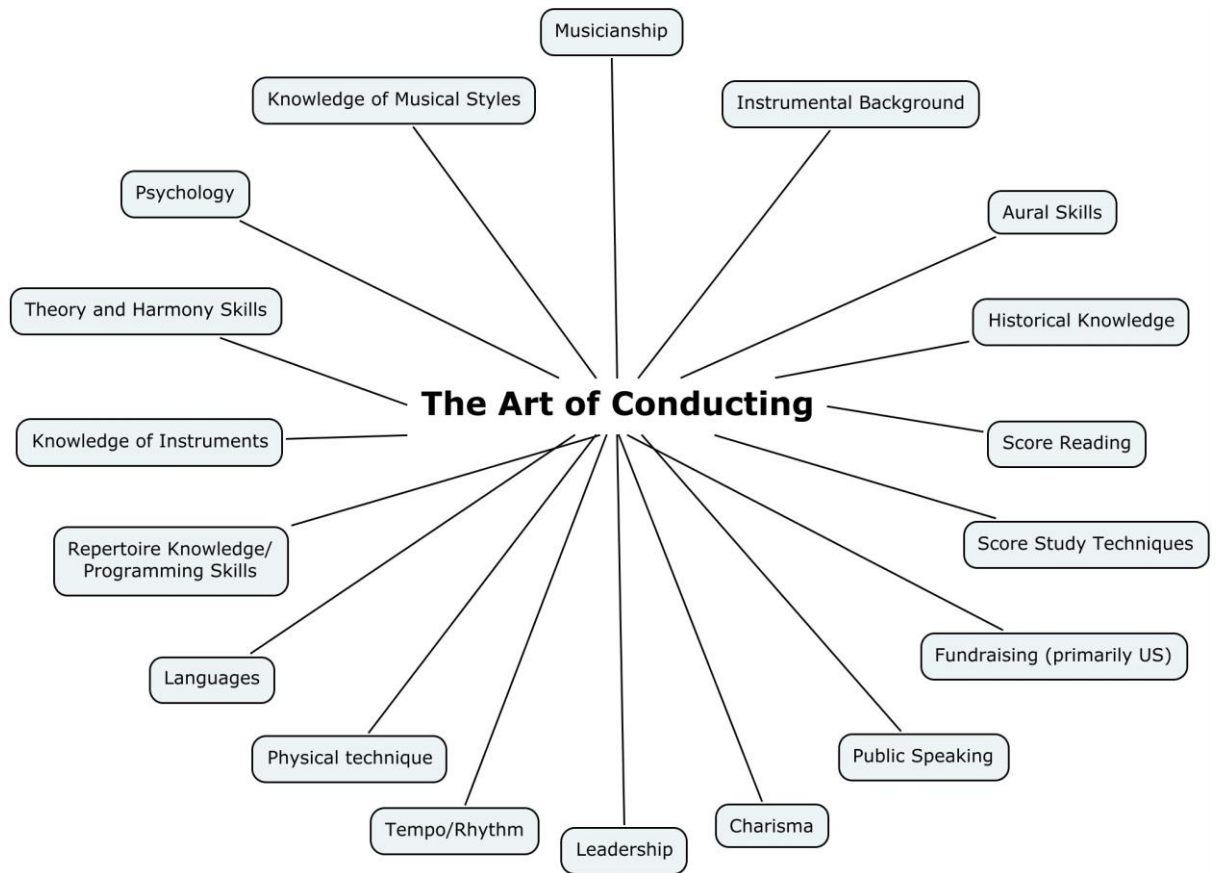


Figure 1. Skills contributing to the art of conducting. Source: Author.

The sheer scope of these individual skills and capabilities begs the question as to whether they can, in fact, be taught. Clearly, some of these skills are able to be taught. Most teachers agree that the physical aspect of conducting can largely be dealt with, and there is no question that areas such as music theory, history, orchestration, languages and repertoire can be learned. Aural skills can be developed, as can general musicianship. However, other elements, such as leadership qualities, charisma, and general communicative abilities may be seen as being beyond the bounds of a conventional education.

- **Can conducting be taught?**

Leopold Stokowski's position can be said to be typical of those doubting the value of a formal education in conducting:

Conductors are born, not made. No amount of academic education can make a real conductor out of someone who is not born with the necessary qualities.²¹

He goes on to temper this stance to a certain extent, acknowledging that certain aspects of the art are able to be taught:

The following aspects of conducting can be taught, provided the conductor already has a deep and broad musical culture – How to beat time. How to read orchestral scores. The nature of the orchestral instruments – their various technical resources, how they sound separately, how they sound when related together in various groups.²²

However, Stokowski feels that there are important aspects that defy formal instruction:

...another aspect of conducting is difficult and perhaps impossible to teach. This has to do with imagination – emotion – suggestion ... To be able to evoke the poetry of the music – to give vitality to every phase of its expression - to understand and project the inner meaning of the music – its deepest essence – its soul – these and many other of the highest qualities of conducting are born in a man. They cannot be taught.²³

These views are still held by many, including some who actively teach conducting. British conductor Christopher Seaman has taught master classes on several continents, and believes that not everything a conductor requires is teachable:

You can help people with skills. You can help people get an orchestra playing, you can help people interpret a piece, but there's an essential bit that's a gift and unteachable. It's a certain unknown quantity whereby somebody can make it happen with an orchestra. But even if someone has that special something, there's a very great deal they have to learn. In their background, in their knowledge, in their skills and what they do physically while they're conducting. You can't have that gift with no accompanying skills.²⁴

According to Seaman, someone who has these special 'gifts' can still benefit greatly from further training. A gifted young conductor might still be well advised to spend some time studying in order to maximise their potential, and increase their chances of success during

²¹ Bamberger, 202.

²² Bamberger, 202.

²³ Bamberger, 202.

²⁴ Christopher Seaman, interview by author, Hobart, 10 February 2012.

the early stages of their career. Lutz Koehler, Professor of conducting at the University of Arts in Berlin also believes in an elusive quality which cannot be taught:

The answer is not too easy, because there are different sides that you can look at in the teaching of conducting. I look very much after the development of the conducting technique – there are certain fundamental rules, just about moving, which creates this or that result. If behind that, there is a real musical, gifted personality ... So in that sense I would say that yes, one can teach conducting. What you can't teach is the 'aura' you need as a conductor. For example, I never forget when Bernard Haitink said about the appointment of Simon Rattle in Berlin 'I understand this so well, this man is a perfect communicator'. This you can't learn. You must have this talent and then you can develop it, but that you can't teach.²⁵

Whilst Koehler views the technical aspects of conducting as being essentially teachable, he defines this special and unteachable quality as the 'aura' of a conductor. He also quotes Haitink as referring to Sir Simon Rattle as a 'perfect communicator'. Rattle is an excellent example of someone who has an easy way of communicating with his musicians, whether it be through gesture or words. Perhaps one could also replace the word 'aura' with 'charisma', and this is often cited as being a desirable quality for any conductor to possess. Traditionally, it is viewed as a quality that cannot be taught. Mark Stringer, Professor of conducting at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, concurs with this view:

What I cannot teach you is charisma. I can teach you tricks – what works and what doesn't, but if you don't have it, that's what I can't give you.²⁶

As Stringer points out, tricks can be taught and good habits relating to body language and other elements can be encouraged, but if a conductor already has these attributes, so much the better. To what extent we can attempt to teach this and other problematic aspects of conducting will be discussed in Part Three.

Markand Thakar of the Peabody Conservatory takes a pragmatic approach to the question of whether or not conducting can be taught:

Yes, conducting can be taught, to the extent that anything can be taught, certainly any instrument. What you can do as a teacher is you can say - here

²⁵ Lutz Koehler, interview by author, Berlin, 28 February 2011.

²⁶ Mark Stringer, interview by author, Vienna, 18 October 2011.

are the standards. Here's what's possible, here's what's necessary, and here's how you can figure out how to meet that. So I tell them, yes, physically here's the control that you can and therefore must have and here's how to gain it. Here's the musical understanding that you can and therefore must have and here's how to get there. But the getting there, the gaining it – that's up to the student.²⁷

According to Thakar, conducting can be taught just as it is possible to teach any particular musical instrument. One could argue certain aspects of musical performance that apply to instrumentalists just as much as conductors, are unteachable, as is probably the case for many artistic endeavours. However, the conductor, unlike the instrumentalist, must engage with other human beings simply to produce sound. It is in this area of human interaction that most of the questions arise as to the ability of the art to be taught. Thakar underlines that the achievement of these goals is finally up to the students. He can point them in the right direction, but it is up to them to make the journey. Perhaps the tertiary-level conducting professor must often play the role of mentor, rather than the role of teacher as it might be literally defined. Johannes Schlaefli of the Zürich University of Arts certainly holds this view:

What does 'teaching' mean? The ancient way of looking at teaching is to transfer the knowledge of how to do something. And how to conduct? The knowledge you transfer on the one hand is very simple and very limited. You have the beating patterns and you have what your hands do. You can teach this. This is very quickly done. But that of course is not the thing that it's all about. The main thing that young people have to learn in conducting is of course the things around the thing itself – how to study a score, how to understand a score, to know about the instruments in the orchestra... you need to understand this organism the orchestra. So there is a lot to teach, and then the way the conductor has to go in my eyes is a unique way and every person has his/her own body language, musical character, their personality, and my duty as a teacher is much more the duty of a coach when that starts.²⁸

If the role of the conducting professor is to act as a coach through the learning process, it surely falls upon the school to provide the best possible environment for learning. Tertiary music schools are well placed to educate an aspiring conductor in the 'things around the thing itself', and should also be able to provide the aspiring conductor with the thing that they

²⁷ Markand Thakar, interview by author, Baltimore, 26 January 2012.

²⁸ Johannes Schlaefli, interview by author, Helsinki, 1 October 2011.

need most – an orchestra with which to practise and hone their skills. The provision of these structures and the resources required are far more complex than what is necessary to educate an instrumentalist, and are therefore unique within the context of tertiary music education. This study investigates the ways in which seven of the leading conducting schools in the world have tackled these challenges, and details the learning environment they provide to their students.

- **Research Questions**

In order to clearly define the aims of this study, the following research questions were developed:

1. Which are the leading tertiary institutions training orchestral conductors today?
2. Has it been demonstrated that conducting can be successfully taught in the framework of a structured tertiary level course?
3. If so, which aspects of conducting can be taught in this context and which cannot?
4. What structures have leading music schools put in place to achieve their goals in conductor training?
5. What can be considered current international best practice in tertiary conductor training?
6. What are the potential future directions for conductor training?

In focusing on orchestral conductor training in the context of tertiary institutions it is not implied that other forms of conductor training are of no consequence, or that a formal qualification is required in order to become a conductor. Many conductors have forged successful careers without a degree in conducting, having studied at summer schools, developed their skills through a mentor relationship with a senior member of the profession, or by learning through trial and error in the profession itself. The potential career paths for

the aspiring conductor are many. However, with 129 tertiary music schools offering degrees in conducting in the United States alone, it is clear that this activity has proliferated in recent years, and is therefore worthy of study in its own right.²⁹

The thesis engages with all aspects of the delivery of the conducting programs chosen for investigation, with the primary emphasis resting on course structures and methods of delivery. The specifics of how teachers deal with the physical aspects of conducting are touched upon, and some specific approaches are investigated in more detail. It must be acknowledged that a detailed analysis of how each individual teacher approaches the physical aspect of conductor training is beyond the scope of this study. Whilst most conducting professors have some basic principles regarding the physical aspect of conducting, many specific issues are dealt with on an individual basis, as and when they arise in the classroom. A thorough and detailed analysis of each pedagogue's classroom methods would therefore require several months of observation. Given the desire to present a broad overview of practices in tertiary schools, it was not possible to spend this length of time at every school. However, these issues were dealt with as much as possible in the interviews conducted. As such, an overview of approaches taken to the physical aspect of conducting is presented in Part One and examples of particular interest are highlighted in Part Two.

- **Thesis overview**

The thesis is divided into three main sections. Part One – Institutional Approaches, discusses the challenges involved with conductor training, and sets forth the various challenges which a tertiary music school aspiring to offer an advanced orchestral conducting program must engage with. It is presented in seven sections as follows:

²⁹ Brian Allen St John, *A study of master's degrees in orchestral conducting in the United States* (DMA dissertation, Arizona State University, 2010), 4.

- 1.1 Undergraduate versus postgraduate programs
- 1.2 The audition
- 1.3 The conductor's instrument: the orchestra
- 1.4 The physical aspect of conducting
- 1.5 The score
- 1.6 The video-camera as a pedagogical tool
- 1.7 Learning to rehearse

It presents the views on these key issues of many leading conducting pedagogues, including conducting professors of the schools investigated, and details their thoughts and responses to particular challenges they have encountered.

This establishes the context for Part Two: Institutional Case Studies, which details the specific approaches to conductor training undertaken by seven leading international tertiary institutions, and compares and analyses the information collected. The emphasis in Part Two is placed on structures, curricula and methods of course delivery at these institutions, and gives a detailed description of the learning environment which each school provides to their conducting students. Each of the seven schools is given its own section as follows:

- 2.1 The Sibelius Academy of Music, Helsinki, Finland
- 2.2 The Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory of Music,
St Petersburg, Russia
- 2.3 The Vienna University of Music and Arts, Vienna, Austria
- 2.4 The Zürich University of Arts, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2.5 The Juilliard School, New York, United States of America
- 2.6 The Peabody Conservatory, Baltimore, United States of America
- 2.7 The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, United States of America

These schools were selected based on their reputation within the conducting world, and the fact that all seven can point to a demonstrable track record of successful graduates who

work at a high level in the professional conducting arena. The selection is intentionally very international, and entails a number of different approaches to conductor training that are pursued around the globe. Some of these schools, such as the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory of Music, have a long history of excellence in conductor training, adhering to long held traditions, whilst others, such as the Zürich University of Arts, have only risen to the fore relatively recently.

It must be acknowledged that other schools worthy of investigation have not been included for various reasons, not least of all the need to contain the study to a realistic field of view. The Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, for example, is a school with a long and prestigious history of conductor training. However, the conducting program at Curtis is currently going through a period of transition with the recent retirement of Otto Werner Mueller, and Mueller has a strict policy of not giving interviews. As such, it did not seem appropriate to include the school in the present study. Other schools worthy of note that have not been examined are the Paris Conservatoire, the Royal Academy of Music, London and the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. The Royal Northern College of Music in particular is well known for its Conducting Fellowship program, which gives the selected Fellows stipends and a generous amount of conducting experience working with the College's orchestras and ensembles. However, this is not a degree program, and in many ways can be viewed as a program bridging the gap between conventional studies and the profession itself. As such it was felt that it did not fit within the designated boundaries of this study. In Germany, twenty-four Staatlichen Musikhochschulen offer tertiary level conducting studies. Programs in these institutions are by and large quite similar, and are designed with a view to providing students with an opportunity to develop their conducting and piano skills before entering the German opera house system. At the present time, no one German school stands out above the rest, and in general, there is a lack of orchestral time offered to students, with most of the teaching done with two pianos. As such it was decided not to include a German school in this study.

It was originally intended to include the Toho School of Music in Tokyo in the investigation. This school, founded by Japanese pedagogue Hideo Saito, has produced many leading Japanese conductors over the last forty years, including Seiji Ozawa and Tadaaki Otaka. Sadly, the conducting program of the Toho School has fallen into a state of disrepair, with no students majoring in conducting when the present author visited Tokyo in November 2011. The leadership of the Toho School indicated a desire to restart the program in the future.

Part Three draws together the information presented thus far. Section 3.1 presents an overview of the information gathered in Part Two, and a summary of what currently constitutes international best practice in the field of orchestral conductor training is presented. Section 3.2 then looks to the future of conducting pedagogy and identifies areas requiring further investigation, which are currently neglected. Based on the investigations undertaken up to this point, Section 3.3 presents a detailed proposed structure and curriculum for a tertiary level orchestral conducting program. The author has attempted to keep budgetary considerations for the proposed course realistic, so that this may act as an appropriate template for a variety of institutions.

Final conclusions and a summary of findings are then presented, and an assessment is presented of where conducting pedagogy stands currently in relation to the question as to whether conducting can be taught.

- **Methodologies**

Due to the scarcity of literature on the subject of conductor training, the thesis is based chiefly on primary source material. New primary source material has been generated in the form of interviews with current and former conducting teachers of the seven institutions selected for study. These interviews have been conducted in person, and the author has travelled to the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Finland, Russia and Japan in order to do so. Some follow up interviews have been conducted via Skype, and

circumstances dictated that one conducting professor was also interviewed using this method.³⁰ In all cases but one, the schools themselves have been visited by the author, allowing the possibility to observe classes, and to interact with students and associated staff other than the primary teacher.³¹ Selected conductors and conducting teachers not necessarily associated with any particular institution have also been interviewed in order to give a broader view of the challenges involved in conductor training, and to provide an objective outlook on courses available. A list of all persons interviewed for the project can be found in the Appendix. Existing primary source material in the form of course curricula has also been used, including syllabi and pedagogical resources written and used by teachers working at the selected institutions.

Though only occasionally drawn upon directly, the literature that does exist on the subject of conductor training has served as a background for the entire thesis. This literature, and the present study's relationship to it, is examined in the following literature review.

³⁰ Professor Uroš Lajovic of the Vienna University of Music and Arts was interviewed via Skype.

³¹ The Zürich University of Arts was not visited in person as Professor Johannes Schlaefli was in Helsinki at the same time as the author. Hence the interview was conducted in Helsinki.

Literature Review

The literature regarding high level orchestral conductor training is surprisingly thin. A great deal has naturally been written about individual conductors themselves, as they have risen to a place of central importance in the classical music world in the twentieth century, as Elliott Galkin has observed:

Since the conductor has become the most frequently publicized of all virtuosi, there are many writings intended for commercial purposes, containing information of only superficial value.³²

Biographies, hagiographies, articles, abound on the subject of the 'great' conductors such as Herbert von Karajan, Leonard Bernstein, Georg Solti and Simon Rattle. According to Finnish researcher and broadcaster Anu Kontinen:

The concepts of mythical maestros and great conductors that were invented and developed further during the twentieth century, can still be detected beneath the new, more critical surface of the writing about and discussion of conductors. In a way conducting and conductors have been almost sacred subjects, not even to be touched on a very profound level.³³

As Kontinen points out, much of the existing literature regarding conductors simply perpetuates the 'maestro myth', and rarely attempts to go beyond the external, glamorous image of the conductor, analysing the processes which are involved in the art form, and identifying what makes a particular conductor unique. Perhaps this is partly because of the view widely held by the public (and encouraged by many maestros) that the art form is unteachable and that they are only able to do what they do by some form of God-given talent. Given the true complexity of the art of conducting, it is clear that there is much room for further research and investigation into many aspects of the profession. The literature relating specifically to the study of conducting consists mostly of handbooks or manuals,

³² Elliott W. Galkin, *A History of Orchestral Conducting: In Theory and Practice* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1988), xxxvii.

³³ Anu Kontinen, *Conducting Gestures: Institutional and Educational Construction of Conductorship in Finland, 1973–1993* (PhD thesis, University of Helsinki, 2008), 16.

giving advice to the aspiring conductor, and are often written with the intention of being used as a textbook for undergraduate conducting programs. Several books of a more general nature by established practitioners of the art also exist, giving advice on different aspects of the profession.

In recent years, a number of texts have been produced which engage with the specific challenges of training conductors. Whilst the handbooks mentioned above are aimed at the student of conducting, these texts, which primarily take the form of doctoral theses or research papers, engage with the subject from the point of view of the teacher. At the time of writing the coverage of this area can be described as sporadic at best, particularly in relation to conductor training that aspires to produce professional orchestral conductors. As such, the present work is based largely on primary sources, and aims to make a significant contribution to this area of research. Nevertheless, several texts of direct interest do exist, and many others serve as a background to this research.

- **Academic dissertations, research papers, and theses**

Mark Heron's *Conducting Education: A review of different approaches to the training of conductors*, provides a useful overview of conductor training practices in tertiary institutions throughout the world.³⁴ Writing in 2005, Heron states:

Even those engaged in serious conducting studies seem to know only in vague terms the approaches to conducting adopted in different parts of the world.³⁵

In 2013, little has changed in this regard. At the highest level of conductor training, it seems most teachers have only an approximate knowledge of what other schools and teachers are doing, particularly in other countries. Heron continues to give a broad outline of structures and approaches in various parts of Europe and North America, and then examines the

³⁴ Mark Heron, *Conducting education: A review of different approaches to the training of conductors* (Masters dissertation, University of Manchester, 2005).

³⁵ Heron, 7.

Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and the St Petersburg Conservatory in more detail. Given Heron's work was written in partial fulfilment of a Masters degree in performance, it is a commendable contribution to our understanding of approaches to conductor training internationally. Unsurprisingly for a work of this scale, it lacks depth and goes in to few details. No schools were visited, and much of the material was gathered through interviews with recent students who remain anonymous. Nevertheless, it was the first work to take a step back and provide a broad view of high-level conductor training activities. Heron also raises the question of whether a tertiary education can provide sufficient preparation for a conductor, and briefly addresses the issue sometimes referred to as 'bridging the gap' between the education of a conductor, and the requirements of the profession itself.

Brian Allen St John provides a similarly broad overview of conductor training activities in his DMA dissertation, *A study of masters degrees in orchestral conducting in the United States*.³⁶ St John's paper focuses entirely on the United States and identifies 129 Masters level conducting programs throughout the country. He then summarises the curricula presented by these programs, highlighting various commonalities and differences. The offerings of three particular schools are then examined in isolation (Peabody Institute, University of Michigan and the University of Texas), but only as far as their course outlines are concerned. The paper presents an interesting snapshot of postgraduate conductor training in America, and in particular, highlights the sheer number of schools where conducting can be studied at this level. The list of schools in itself is a useful resource for future researchers, and some of the statistics extracted from the data are of interest; though as they are largely based on information sourced through the internet, their accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

Also in the United States, Virginia Allen examines conductor education from a different perspective in her 2011 doctoral dissertation, *Developing expertise in professional American*

³⁶ Brian Allen St John, *A study of master's degrees in orchestral conducting in the United States* (DMA dissertation, Arizona State University, 2010).

orchestra conductors.³⁷ Allen begins by emphasising the broad range of abilities expected of today's professional conductor, and points to a 2008 strategic plan written by the Curtis leadership which stated:

Conducting is a unique discipline, and the broad education of young conductors is a uniquely multi-faceted process that no American conservatory has fully mastered.³⁸

Though some American conservatories would surely dispute this claim, Allen presents a persuasive argument for broadening the content presented in many postgraduate orchestral conducting programs. The study is based on seven in-depth interviews with professional American orchestra conductors of varying levels, and aims to deduce what they perceive their responsibilities as professional conductors to be, and where, when and how they learned the skills necessary to deal with these responsibilities. In her conclusions, Allen states:

...most of their critical learning experiences occur in college and in the early career years. These are challenging times when conductors need the most support, yet they no longer have the support system of teachers, colleagues, and friends they had in college... Another challenge during this time occurs when conductors begin to realize that gaps in their academic training have left them unprepared for many responsibilities they assumed in the workplace.³⁹

Much of Allen's work is aimed at addressing this issue of 'bridging the gap', as raised by Heron. She recommends that music schools should help students to develop the self-learning skills that they will need upon entering the profession, and that curricula should be broadened to include issues such as leadership, programming, fundraising, public speaking, rehearsal skills and social skills. Some of these recommendations (such as fundraising and social skills) are of particular relevance to conductors working in the American market, but others might be applied more generally.

³⁷ Virginia Allen, *Developing expertise in professional American orchestra conductors* (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2011).

³⁸ Allen, 1.

³⁹ Allen, 245.

Continuing the theme of possible new directions in conductor training, Alan Baker Lee's 1992 DMA paper, *Creating conductors: An analysis of conducting pedagogy in American higher education*, is an oft-cited work in the conductor training literature.⁴⁰ The title, however, is somewhat misleading, in that Lee does not conduct an investigation and analysis of conducting pedagogy as it stands, but rather, points to inadequacies in conducting training as he has experienced it and believes it is delivered elsewhere. The paper is well-written and well-argued, with a particularly interesting section on the internal and external motivations of conductors, and provides suggestions for improving conductor training based on the teachings and writings of singer/actor trainer, Wesley H. Balk. This work is one of several that have appeared over the last thirty years, arguing that conducting pedagogy should look to other disciplines, such as acting, dance or theories of movement, when exploring possibilities for the teaching of the physical aspects of conducting. Two works that stand out from this group due to their high quality are Charles Gambetta's, *Conducting Outside the Box: Creating a Fresh Approach to Conducting Gesture Through the Principles of Laban Movement Analysis*,⁴¹ and Andrew Mathers', *How theories of expressive movement and non-verbal communication can enhance expressive conducting at all levels of entering behaviour*.⁴² Gambetta's detailed and well-structured study argues that conductor training could benefit significantly from adopting Laban Movement Analysis, a system ordinarily used in dance, to describe and inform the movements of conducting students. However, one wonders if adopting such a system might ultimately place an extra, and unnecessary, impediment between the student's gestures and the intentions of the composer. Mathers, on the other hand, takes a broader view, examining the movement theories of Laban, Dalcroze, Delsarte, Alexander and Feldenkrais, and suggesting potential

⁴⁰ Alan Lee Baker, *Creating Conductors: An Analysis of Conducting Pedagogy in American Higher Education* (DMA dissertation, Stanford University, 1992).

⁴¹ Charles L. Gambetta, *Conducting Outside the Box: Creating a Fresh Approach to Conducting Gesture Through the Principles of Laban Movement Analysis* (DMA dissertation, University of North Carolina, 2005).

⁴² Andrew Mathers, *How theories of expressive movement and non-verbal communication can enhance expressive conducting at all levels of entering behaviour* (PhD dissertation, Monash University, 2008).

applications for conductors. The section examining the issue of kinaesthesia in general is particularly interesting, and this study would be an excellent starting place for anyone interested in this particular field of research. While of limited use in the core of this study, the potential of some of the ideas expressed, in particular the idea of looking to other disciplines, will be discussed in Part Three, 'Potential new directions for conductor training.'

Two European studies are of particular relevance to this study, as they investigate conductor training at the Sibelius Academy in Finland, an institution whose conducting program is examined in this document. *Potenziale der professionellen Dirigentenausbildung: Eine kritisch-konstruktive Untersuchung am Beispiel Deutschlands und Finnlands* by Wilke Peter Hammerschmidt compares and contrasts the conductor education systems in Germany and Finland, with a view to discovering what the German Hochschulen can learn from the Finns.⁴³ Hammerschmidt argues that German schools should offer their students more time conducting orchestras (like the Finns) and that there are ways to achieve this which need not be prohibitively expensive. He maintains that the Kapellmeister system, whereby young conductors learn by starting as a répétiteur and rising through the ranks through the opera houses is not as relevant as it once was, and Hochschulen should be more open-minded about the future career-paths of their students, and place less emphasis on them having keyboard skills. It is difficult to argue with Hammerschmidt's first point regarding the lack of direct orchestra contact in many German programs. However, his other findings are likely to have been controversial in Germany. The study seems to begin with the premise that conductor training in Finland is intrinsically better, and of course, making comparisons between one school of a dozen students and the twenty-four schools of a much larger country, is problematic. Whether one agrees with the final conclusions arrived at or not, a large number of facts and statistics are presented in the argument, detailing the approaches taken to conductor training in both countries, particularly from a structural point of view.

⁴³ Wilke Peter Hammerschmidt, *Potenziale der professionellen Dirigentenausbildung: Eine kritisch-konstruktive Untersuchung am Beispiel Deutschlands und Finnlands* (PhD dissertation, University of Passau, 2008).

Anu Kontinnen's 2008 PhD dissertation, *Conducting Gestures: Institutional and Educational Construction of Conductorship in Finland, 1973-1993*, provides many interesting insights into the specific timeframe when Jorma Panula was professor of conducting at the Sibelius Academy.⁴⁴ A significant portion of the work is based on interviews with Panula himself and many of his most successful students, and there are many details sourced from this material that have given the present work an extra level of depth, particularly in matters relating to Finland. As well as examining the practices of Jorma Panula, a large part of Kontinnen's thesis examines conducting from a sociological point of view and engages with the mythology surrounding the 'great conductor'. The other side of the thesis examines conducting from a practical point of view, with a stated ultimate goal of analysing the physical gestures of a conductor and in so doing, 'to look for the practical core – here understood as the reverse side of the myth – of the profession.'⁴⁵ Kontinnen's work is thought provoking and raises many important issues along the way. Ultimately though, her aim of providing a meaningful analysis of the physical gestures of conductors proves too ambitious. Written in 2008, the study virtually ignores all activities at the Sibelius Academy after 1993, and only seeks the views of Finns who studied with Panula during this period, despite numerous foreigners also being present, giving the study a monocultural feel. It seems that the works of both Hammerschmidt and Kontinnen suffer to a certain degree from a lack of critical objectivity towards conductor education in Finland, and are too ready to hold up the Sibelius Academy as a role model.

- **Conducting manuals and textbooks**

The bulk of the established literature on the subject of educating and training conductors consists of instructional manuals aimed at the aspiring conductor, or in some cases, aimed at the author's less well-informed colleagues. Whilst these works are only occasionally

⁴⁴ Anu Kontinnen, *Conducting Gestures: Institutional and Educational Construction of Conductorship in Finland, 1973-1993* (PhD dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2008).

⁴⁵ Kontinnen, 9.

referenced in this thesis, they provide a wealth of background information on the subject in general, and represent the bulk of the published literature dedicated to the study of conducting. Two of the earliest examples of instructional manuals of this kind are *L'art du chef d'orchestre* by Hector Berlioz⁴⁶ and Richard Wagner's *Über das dirigieren*, both from the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ These relatively brief works (that of Berlioz was first published as an extension to his orchestration treatise) give a fascinating insight into the culture of orchestral music at the time and are of significant historical interest. Berlioz gives much practical advice, much of which is still relevant today, whilst Wagner's essay concerns itself mostly with issues of interpretation, philosophies of music making, and the political situations in German opera houses at the time. Felix Weingartner, one of the leading conductors of his era, published his own essay entitled *Über das dirigieren*, in 1895.⁴⁸ This text concerns itself mostly with issues of interpretation and style, with particularly interesting critiques of his well-known contemporary Hans von Bülow, whom Weingartner felt took too many musical liberties with the scores he was conducting. Weingartner himself was one of the leading teachers of conducting in the early 20th century, having taught Hans Swarowsky, Andrzej Panufnik and many other influential figures.

As the profession of conducting became more established in the first half of the twentieth century, more detailed and substantial works began to appear. Perhaps the leading work to come from this period is Hermann Scherchen's seminal book *Lehrbuch des Dirigierens*, first published in 1929 and since translated into several languages.⁴⁹ This book examines the technical aspects of conducting and goes into significant detail regarding the workings of a modern orchestra, and what skills a conductor must possess to be successful. Of particular

⁴⁶ Hector Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes: nouvelle édition augmentée de l'Art du chef d'orchestre* (Paris: Schonenberger, 1855), *l'Art du chef d'orchestre* reprinted as *The Conductor, The Theory of his Art*, trans. John Broadhouse (Michigan: Scholarly Press, 1970).

⁴⁷ Richard Wagner, *Über das Dirigieren* (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1869), reprinted as *Wagner on Conducting*, trans. Edward Dannreuther (New York: Dover Publications, 1989).

⁴⁸ Felix Weingartner, *Über das Dirigieren* (Berlin: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1895) reprinted as *On Conducting*, trans. Ernest Newman (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1925).

⁴⁹ Hermann Scherchen, *Lehrbuch des Dirigierens* (Mainz: Schott, 1929) reprinted as *Handbook of Conducting*, trans. M.D. Calvocoressi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

relevance to this thesis, Scherchen is one of the first writers to engage in the argument of the whether or not conducting can be taught, and presents a strong case for the active training of conductors. He discusses common attitudes of the era to this question in his introductory remarks:

How does one learn to conduct? The current answer is by 'acquiring routine' – which means, by being let loose, without technical knowledge, on works, orchestra, and audience, in order to acquire through 'experience', in the course of long years of anti-artistic barbarity, the tricks of the trade.⁵⁰

Of course, there may be some skills that a trained conductor still needs to acquire through experience, but hopefully, the years of 'anti-artistic barbarity' will be few. It seems Scherchen found little support for his views amongst his colleagues at the time:

Whenever the problem is discussed with conductors, one finds them underrating it most presumptuously: 'Conducting cannot be learnt; either one is born a conductor or one never becomes one.'⁵¹

Scherchen states in clear and simple terms that conducting can and should be taught. Having been one of the leading teachers of the time, he felt his own experiences demonstrated the benefits of an education:

I have trained pupils whom I should be prepared to certify as capable when facing an orchestra for the first time, of conducting a big orchestral work cleanly and intelligently, without any rehearsal. It is at this point that a conductor and an orchestra begin to meet on equal terms, and that any exceptional artistic and musical potentiality in the conductor can be transmitted to the orchestra and find its utterance.⁵²

It is clear from Scherchen's writing that his approach to teaching conducting was to play the score at the piano himself, following and interpreting the student's gestures, and that this was considered the norm.⁵³ That this would today be considered inadequate as a basis for

⁵⁰ Scherchen, 3.

⁵¹ Scherchen, 3.

⁵² Scherchen, 4.

⁵³ Scherchen, 20.

tuition demonstrates how far the education of conductors has developed, particularly in terms of gaining access to an instrument with which to practise.

It is also interesting to observe the differences between Scherchen's book and its more recent equivalents. Whilst the former does discuss the physical aspects of conducting in some detail, a great deal of it is spent examining the workings of the orchestra in an extended section entitled 'The science of the orchestra'. This is in contrast to today's textbooks, which usually spend a great deal of time investigating the physical movements of the conductor, but only touch upon the workings of the orchestra. This work is still considered an important reference for students of conducting and remains widely available.

Nikolai Malko's *The Conductor and his Baton* (1950), on the other hand, is one of the first to go in depth into technical details, and like Scherchen, makes the case that conducting should be taught:

An essential part of study is listening to other conductors (or performances) and critical analysis of what is heard. But no pianist or violinist limits his training to listening to other pianists or violinists. A constant, individual and personal training, based on definite method and under the guidance of a teacher is necessary. Why then should, or could, the conductor be an exception?⁵⁴

Malko goes into far more detail than Scherchen in his suggestions for physical movement, and gives exercises designed to assist the student in achieving a well-balanced technique. The work is of particular interest as Malko is an important figure in the history of conductor training, having been the founder of the conducting school at the St Petersburg Conservatory in the 1920s, and having trained key pedagogical figures such as Ilya Musin and Nikolai Rabinovitch. This is an excellent book, but it is unfortunate that it is currently out of print. Perhaps because of this, it has not received the full attention it deserves. He states in his conclusion to the work that it is part one of a larger work, *The Fundamentals of the Art of Conducting*, but sadly, he did not live to complete the second volume. However, the parts

⁵⁴ Nikolai Malko, *The Conductor and his Baton* (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1950).

of the work he had completed were gathered after his death and published in 1975 in *The Conductor and His Score*.⁵⁵

A shift in tone is discernible in the texts written in the second half of the twentieth century. This is perhaps due to the study of conducting becoming more formalised, and beginning to appear regularly on the curricula of music schools throughout the world. One such university oriented text is *The Modern Conductor: a college text based on the principles of Nicolai Malko*, by Elizabeth Green, first published in 1961.⁵⁶ Green, herself a recognised teacher at the University of Michigan, studied with Malko and assisted him in the final editing of his work. Her own book has undergone several revisions since its initial publication and is currently in its seventh edition. It is worth noting that the work bears little resemblance to Malko's, though some of the underlying technical principles may be the same. The text has become ubiquitous in tertiary music schools, and is a reliable resource for an undergraduate non-major conducting program. Green differentiates between the science of conducting and the art of conducting, and firmly believes the former can be taught.⁵⁷

One of the texts that dominates this period is Max Rudolf's *The Grammar of Conducting*, first published in 1950, and revised in 1980 and 1995.⁵⁸ Like Malko's book, it explains the standard beating patterns, and lays out approaches to many of the technical challenges that a conductor will face in the established orchestral repertoire. Rudolf also goes on to discuss many other issues including rehearsal technique, psychological aspects of conducting, balance issues, working in opera, and general musical challenges. It is clearly written with a classroom setting in mind, and remains at the forefront of texts relating to conductor education today, over sixty years after its initial publication. It can comfortably serve as a background text for teaching at all levels, but is particularly suitable for more advanced

⁵⁵ Elizabeth A. H Green and Nicolai Malko, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975).

⁵⁶ Elizabeth A. H Green, *The Modern Conductor: a college text based on the principles of Nicolai Malko* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961).

⁵⁷ Elizabeth A.H. Green, 'On the teaching of conducting', *Music Educator's Journal* 47/6 (1961): 50-56.

⁵⁸ Max Rudolf, *The Grammar of Conducting: A Practical Study of Modern Baton Technique*, 3rd ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1995).

conductors, due to its depth and variety of material, and non-dogmatic style. In the final chapter of the book, Rudolf states:

It is indeed the mark of a true educator to instil in students a thirst for knowledge that will make them seek for a wide range of information beyond what they have learned in school. In other words, the most essential aim of education must be to teach students how to study on their own.⁵⁹

The book can be considered then as a guide for a student who is at the beginning of a long journey, with their formal education being just the beginning. Rudolf's writings read as if this is what he had in mind.

In 1956, Hideo Saito published his treatise, *The Saito Conducting Method*, published in its English translation in 1988.⁶⁰ Saito was a leading figure in Japan's musical life following the Second World War. A cellist and conductor, he founded the Toho Gakuen School of Music, and taught many of Japan's most famous conductors including Seiji Ozawa, Tadaaki Otaka and Hiroshi Wakasugi. Saito's book articulates a highly detailed technical approach to conducting, which is primarily concerned with the motions of the right arm and hand. Whilst diagrams of 'beat patterns' are common in conducting treatises, Saito was the first to include the velocity of the baton at any given moment of the beat through the use of thinning and thickening lines. This is of crucial importance to the 'Saito method', which is largely based on the changing velocities of the conducting arm. At the beginning of the 21st century, the method is rarely taught in its entirety, although it is widely known thanks largely to Seiji Ozawa's classes at Tanglewood. Many teachers adopt certain techniques from it for illustrative purposes.

One of the most influential teachers in the history of conducting to date, Ilya Musin, taught at the St Petersburg Conservatory in Russia from 1932 to 1999. A former pupil of Malko, Musin developed his own distinct, methodical approach to the technique of conducting as well as most other aspects of the art. 1967 saw the publication of the first

⁵⁹ Rudolf, 412.

⁶⁰ Hideo Saito, *The Saito Conducting Method*, Wayne Troews (ed.) (Tokyo: Min-on Concert Association, 1988).

edition of his magnum opus, *The Technique of Conducting*, which underwent further development throughout his life.⁶¹ In the book he lays out his approach in exhaustive detail, with particular emphasis on his thoughts on the role of the upbeat in conducting. The depth and detail of material presented is such that many students may find the work somewhat intimidating. Fortunately, a more easily digestible summation of Musin's methods can be found in the form of a DVD, filmed in the last years of his life. In the opening segment of the video, Musin says, 'Beating time is simple, however expression is important and adding it is difficult.'⁶² This simple sentence says much about Musin's approach, as the video demonstrates his continual searching for expressive possibilities in the music being performed. The DVD contains six hours of footage, much of which is Musin explaining his method directly to the camera, interspersed with examples of him teaching in his studio. The DVD is also accompanied by an unusually substantial booklet summarising and condensing his key writings. Whether a student is wishing to learn the 'Musin method' per se or not, there is a treasure trove of information and advice to be found in this resource. Sadly the DVD is no longer in print, although it can be found in many university libraries. To date, Musin's writings have not been published in English and, as a result, have been unjustly neglected outside of Russia. However, an English translation is in preparation by his former pupil, Oleg Proskurnya, and the current author is thankful to Mr Proskurnya for allowing him access to this text. Other notable works by Musin include *The Education of a Conductor*⁶³ and his autobiography, *Lessons of Life*.⁶⁴

Also worthy of mention is *Score and Podium* by Frederik Prausnitz, published in 1983.⁶⁵ Prausnitz was an important teacher in the United States, and taught at two of the schools investigated in this study: the Juilliard School in New York and the Peabody Institute in Baltimore. The book is unique in its content and, as its title suggests, is devoted as much to

⁶¹ Ilya Musin, *Tehnika dirizhirovaniia* [The Technique of Conducting] (Leningrad: Muzyka, 1967).

⁶² *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, dir. Vitaly Fialkovsky, DVD (St.Petersburg: Compozitor Publishing House, 2006).

⁶³ Ilya Musin, *O vospitanii dirizhiora* [On Educating a Conductor] (Leningrad: Muzyka, 1987).

⁶⁴ Ilya Musin, *Lessons of Life* (St. Petersburg: Muzyka, 1995).

⁶⁵ Frederik Prausnitz, *Score and Podium* (New York: Norton and Co., 1983).

how a student should learn and digest a score as it is to the physical aspects of conducting.

Prausnitz states in his introduction:

The most important objectives in our study will involve those disciplines which enable you to absorb and work with information available in the score; and the development of simple physical skills which, with a clear understanding of the principles governing the beat, enable conductors to maintain a flow of signals from the podium.⁶⁶

Whilst the book is in many ways a personal statement of one man's view of the art, it provides advice on a blend of skills that cannot be found elsewhere. Regrettably, it is not in print at the time of writing, and one hopes that Norton will re-issue it at some stage in the future.

In 2009, the successor to Prausnitz at Peabody, Gustav Meier, published his own book entitled *The Score, The Orchestra, and the Conductor*.⁶⁷ Meier's contribution to the discipline, however, is very different from that of Prausnitz. Meier's work can be said to be a highly detailed guide to all practical aspects of conducting, from approaches to score study and preparation, seating arrangements, through to technical issues, and advice on handling tempo changes. It also includes an extensive appendix detailing all manner of instruments which a conductor may encounter in an orchestra. Due to this technical emphasis, and the absence of any philosophical discussions regarding the process of music making, it is perhaps best viewed as a reference book for the aspiring conductor.

- **General texts aimed at the student of conducting**

A number of books of note exist aimed at the aspiring conductor that cannot be classified as handbooks or conducting manuals. Erich Leinsdorf's *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* remains a classic of the conducting literature and essential reading

⁶⁶ Prausnitz, 3.

⁶⁷ Gustav Meier, *The Score, the Orchestra, and the Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

for any conductor.⁶⁸ Leinsdorf does not engage with any of the physical aspects of conducting; indeed, he states that he believes that a conductor's motions 'are of no consequence'.⁶⁹ Rather, the book is about the score and how it should be interpreted, and advocates the importance of musical literacy. It is a wonderful insight into the thinking of an old world maestro, and his insistence on a disciplined and respectful approach to the score is an important lesson for all students of conducting.

Less well known is *The Psychology of Conducting* by Peter Paul Fuchs.⁷⁰ Fuchs was born in Vienna and emigrated to the United States shortly before the Second World War, joining the music staff at the Metropolitan Opera. It is not a book on psychology in the modern sense of the word, but rather details a working conductor's experiences in the profession, and his subsequent reflections on the most challenging aspects of it. It covers many areas and includes practical advice for conductors embarking on a career of the sort that is not generally found in textbooks.

Gunther Schuller's *The Compleat Conductor* is a well-known and provocative text.⁷¹ Though not necessarily aimed specifically at students (or teachers) of conducting, this book has much to offer the aspiring conductor. It is divided into three distinct sections - in Part I Schuller imparts his philosophy of conducting, and also advocates a thorough course of development for conductors:

Talent may be innate, inborn, even inherited; but talent, no matter how great, needs to be developed, nurtured, and honed.⁷²

Schuller goes on to give fascinating insights as to what the role of a conductor should be. Part II examines the history and development of conducting as an art form from the early eighteenth century to the present day. Although not nearly as detailed or extensive as Elliot

⁶⁸ Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

⁶⁹ Leinsdorf, 168.

⁷⁰ Peter Paul Fuchs, *The Psychology of Conducting*, (New York: MCA Music, 1969).

⁷¹ Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁷² Schuller, 3.

Galkin's landmark work on the subject, Schuller gives the subject his unique perspective.⁷³ Part III which forms the main body of the work, takes a selection of pieces from the standard repertoire, and then dissects the recordings of these works made by many leading conductors. Whilst this final section may at times seem like a diatribe against conductors more successful than Schuller, the student of conducting can learn much from his reasons for objecting to a particular interpretation of a work.

- **Summary**

All of the above-mentioned textbooks, and more general books aimed at the student of conducting, have been written by experienced conductors. In some cases the authors have dedicated their professional lives to teaching and have presided over prestigious tertiary level conducting programs. Despite this, the authors rarely delve into the challenges of teaching conducting, and the texts remain firmly aimed at the student thirsty for knowledge. Issues relating to the delivery of a conducting program, such as course structure, length of studies, the appropriate age for studies, and approaches to classroom teaching, are not discussed. While each book gives us a picture of what the author believes a young conductor should be striving for, none of the texts advise the teacher of conducting or a school of music how to set up a program that will help the student achieve these goals. This is a significant gap in the literature on conductor training.

The proliferation of doctoral studies over the last thirty years has led to this issue gaining some attention in the academic literature. The surveys of Heron and St John provide a cursory overview of conductor training activities, but do not examine any school's approaches in real depth. Kontinen has investigated Jorma Panula's tenure as conducting professor at the Sibelius Academy, whilst Hammerschmidt has undertaken a comparison of strategies adopted for conductor training in Finland and Germany. However, no study to

⁷³ Elliott W. Galkin, *A History of Orchestral Conducting: In Theory and Practice* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1988).

date has analysed the challenges confronting a tertiary level conducting program, and detailed the responses to these challenges by a broad selection of leading international schools. This study fills this gap, and in so doing, provides a valuable resource for any institution wishing to offer a high-level orchestral conducting program.

Part One: Institutional approaches

- 1.1 Undergraduate versus postgraduate programs
- 1.2 The audition
- 1.3 The conductor's instrument: the orchestra
- 1.4 The physical aspect of conducting
- 1.5 The score
- 1.6 The video-camera as a pedagogical tool
- 1.7 Learning to rehearse

The challenges facing a music school wishing to offer an advanced conducting program are numerous. Such schools normally have established programs for instrumentalists. However, the structures and resources required to implement a successful conducting program differ substantially from those of other music students. Part One identifies these specific challenges, and presents the thoughts of leading conducting pedagogues regarding potential solutions. As well as being valuable in their own right, these discussions also serve to provide a context for the case studies of specific schools presented in Part Two.

1.1 Undergraduate versus postgraduate programs

One of the first issues a music school designing a conducting program needs to address is whether the course should be offered at the undergraduate level, postgraduate level, or both. In the English speaking world, tertiary level conducting programs are almost exclusively offered at the postgraduate level.¹ In Europe, however, undergraduate conducting programs are common, with postgraduate options often being offered as an extension. Underpinning this question of the level of studies is the issue of what age is the most appropriate to study conducting intensively, and whether there is such a thing as being too young or too old.

The other question that needs to be considered is the length of studies. A Bachelor degree will ordinarily be three or four years in length, whereas a Masters degree may only be two years in duration. For Lutz Koehler who leads an undergraduate conducting program in Berlin, this is an important issue, and is one reason why he favours the undergraduate approach:

I want to give them a chance to study for a long time, there's the repertoire [to learn]. The Masters is only two years, you can't build up a repertoire in two years.²

The standard repertoire that a conductor should at least be familiar with is enormous and the two year duration of a Masters program, as Koehler points out, does not give much time to digest a broad and encompassing repertoire. Mark Stringer also presides over an undergraduate conducting program:

The younger the student for me the better, if they're talented, because there's real potential there. It's practical – the profession prefers younger people. By 25 in this profession you are fairly over the hill, and yet we are letting people in at 25 and I keep saying, 'What's the point?' They are not going to get the beginning jobs in the opera houses.³

¹ The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia being a notable exception to this.

² Lutz Koehler, interview by author, Berlin, 28 February 2011.

³ Mark Stringer, interview by author, Vienna, 18 October 2011.

Stringer underlines the profession's preference for youth, which seems to have become more exaggerated in recent years. Jorma Panula, Professor of conducting at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki from 1973-1993, is famous for taking this youth approach to extremes and is actively involved in training Finns still in their early teens through his 'Noordisokappu' or youth class. This is an official class at the Sibelius Academy which high school students can apply for, and meets for three hours on most weekends. Students are encouraged to bring their instruments and play for each other, while Panula plays the piano. As far as Panula is concerned, the only pre-requisite for joining is that they are highly proficient on an instrument and have experience playing in an orchestra or ensemble.⁴ The advantage of this approach is that the students can be encouraged to develop good habits on the podium at a young age. The very existence of this class also sends out a message to young Finns that conducting is something that can be considered as a potential career option, and gifted students can be identified at an early stage of their development. These gifted students can then be guided towards the Sibelius Academy's full time conducting program, which is offered at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Leif Segerstam, Professor of conducting at the Sibelius Academy from 1997-2013, agrees with Panula's youth approach, providing the students can play an instrument well. He explains further:

The age of studying conducting is when you are good enough on an instrument. You have to be super on an instrument because anyway you won't get any authority unless you are a great musician already on some instrument when you get up front.⁵

The other issue Segerstam points to is the student's level of musicianship. Regardless of a student's technical capabilities on an instrument, they must also be well-rounded musicians, and be in the process of developing their own, distinct, musical point of view. However, not everyone in Finland agrees with this 'ultra-youth' approach. Atso Almila, Panula's long-time assistant at the Sibelius Academy has some reservations:

⁴ Jorma Panula, interview by author, Helsinki, 3 November 2012.

⁵ Leif Segerstam, interview by author, Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

Jorma – and I understand him – wants to give as young as possible these basic skills and I feel that you should be the same age that you can drive a car. So it's a question of this maturity with other people... I'm not sure if he's right or if I am right, but I haven't taken to my courses anyone who is under eighteen, unless there is a really good reason.⁶

Almila's analogy with being, 'the same age that you can drive a car', is an interesting one. Evidently he sees the act of conducting an orchestra as having a similar level of responsibility to that of driving a motor vehicle and the aspiring conductor must be ready to take on these very real responsibilities. He continues:

I see his point because he is very worried about the future of the whole teaching and so worried about if the right musicians understand early enough that they would have possibilities this side. But I also see sometimes that people might come from these directions and then they have to face a very different and dangerous world and they are still like children. Then it's a huge responsibility for us who take care of them later, to make them understand that this is not playing anymore. This is for real and people might eat you alive.⁷

Panula's idea seems to be to plant the seed of interest in conducting early, whilst encouraging these fledgling students to continue to focus on their instrumental studies. It has to be said that this approach has been successful at producing many young talents, with conductors such as Mikko Franck, Pietari Inkinen, Santu-Matias Rovali and Eva Ollikainen all entering the profession at a notably young age. But there are significant dangers, as Almila points out. The world of professional conducting can be a brutal one and any conductor entering it in their late teens or early twenties will need to possess unusually thick skin for their age to survive. Classical music agencies are famous for thrusting young artists into challenging situations and then stepping back to see if they sink or swim. If they swim, a great career may beckon, but if not, a talented musician's career may be over before it has begun. As Almila says, it's not child's play once things reach that level, and negative professional experiences at a young age could have a damaging psychological impact on a student that lasts for many years. This may be particularly so if he or she has spent their

⁶ Atso Almila, interview by author, Helsinki, 21 October 2011.

⁷ Almila.

formative teenage years dreaming of being a conductor. Whilst there are obvious potential advantages to giving young teens some tuition, caution must surely be exercised, and expectations kept in check.

James Ross, who co-directs the Juilliard School's postgraduate conducting program in New York, has similar views to Almila:

I think for the particular qualities that leadership of orchestras requires, it's kind of a rare person who's younger than about twenty who can take that on in such a way that they're able to play or experiment with that side of the role... Until you've already excelled on an instrument or made music with other people at a high level and really, I think we're looking for people in our program who play something really well. So for me, twenty is early enough. That's a good age. It's OK to be interested in it prior to that and to get excited by it, but actually when you're up doing stuff much before nineteen or twenty, I'm not sure it does you so much good.⁸

Twenty is probably the youngest age that a student would normally enter a postgraduate program, so the implication here is that enrolling in an undergraduate degree on your instrument first is a good idea. Few students will have the possibility to make music, 'with other people at a high level', before entering an undergraduate program.⁹ It seems that Ross is also looking for a certain level of personal maturity when he speaks of the leadership qualities necessary for the job, and again, this points to a postgraduate level program.

Kenneth Kiesler teaches such a program at the University of Michigan, where a Masters degree and Doctor of Musical Arts are offered. He also believes postgraduate studies are preferable:

There is a certain level of maturity that comes with pursuing an education for a while and growing up a bit, becoming socialised, becoming aware of so many other issues that are extra-musical and non-musical, that are so important to conductors.¹⁰

Kiesler speaks of 'growing up', 'becoming socialised' and 'issues that are extra-musical and non-musical'. It is a common view that the student should have had time to become a well-

⁸ James Ross, interview by author, New York, 20 January 2012.

⁹ It could be argued that Finland is an exception to this due to its high quality secondary school music education.

¹⁰ Kenneth Kiesler, interview by author, Ann Arbor, 17 January 2012.

rounded human being with a variety of experiences, as this perhaps will aid them in having a more assured presence on the podium.

Johannes Schlaefli's program at the Zürich School of Music is unique in the sense that it offers studies at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, but the emphasis is very much on the latter. In most German speaking schools this emphasis is reversed. He explains why this is the case and how he has approached the problem of undergraduate studies:

We are very careful about students studying a Bachelor in conducting, because I think that still the best way is someone becomes a musician first. And it's very good to play an orchestral instrument – it's not necessary, but it's very good, to know the orchestra from the inside and then to do that step... but now it is possible to start the musical studies with the main subject conducting. But it was very important for me to do it in a way that they have to have another first subject, an instrument or voice. So they have to finish the three year studies, not only with conducting but also with their instrument or voice. So they must also become active musicians in these three years.¹¹

Effectively then, a Bachelor level conducting student in Zürich will do a 'double-Major' and have two areas of specialisation for three years. This seems to be an attractive compromise for the student who has the ambition to enter a conducting program straight out of high school, and allows their general musicianship to develop alongside their formative attempts at conducting.

Much like Lutz Koehler, Schlaefli sees the problem of just doing a Masters degree, believing two years is not enough time. In Zürich this problem is solved by offering a second 'specialised' Masters degree to students who need more time. In the United States it is relatively common practice for students to pursue a doctorate in conducting for another three years following on from a Masters, usually in the form of a Doctor of Musical Arts (abbreviated and henceforth referred to as a DMA). Of the schools investigated in this study, both the Peabody Conservatory and University of Michigan offer DMA programs.

Is there then an age at which it is too old to begin studies? Alexander Polishchuk of the St. Petersburg Conservatoire certainly believes so:

¹¹ Johannes Schlaefli, interview by author, Helsinki, 1 October 2011.

Of course there is some boundary age of teaching, because after thirty-five I'm afraid it's quite late to start to teach because.... it's much harder than with younger people for muscle to get in new feelings - new feelings of character of motion, new feelings of co-ordination of arm and between the arms.¹²

Polishchuk sees some physical obstacles for late starters. Markand Thakar has similar views:

There is that expression: 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks.' I have found that the more solidified someone's habits are and understandings are then the harder it is for them to change... Physically because in very real terms, it's about releasing tensions. But the older you are, the more tensions that you have ingrained, the harder it is to release them. I think musically it's similar.¹³

Whilst an older student may bring a wealth of experience to the podium in a variety of areas, developing good physical habits (and undoing bad ones) may be a challenge. Polishchuk mentions the age of thirty-five and this does seem like a reasonable age to suggest as the outer limit for obtaining a formal degree in conducting. Of course, there will always be exceptions to the rule and the lack of a formal qualification in no way precludes somebody from pursuing a professional conducting career. Many established instrumentalists have made the switch from soloist to conductor at a relatively late age, bringing with them their heightened musical sensibilities and established reputation with the concert-going public. However, it is not unusual for these musicians to struggle with the physical aspect of conducting, and have difficulties finding appropriate gestures to communicate their musical vision.

Whether it is more appropriate for a school to offer an undergraduate or postgraduate course, will depend on several issues, including the quality of potential applicants at a particular age, and the potential career paths students may follow upon graduation. It seems the general consensus is that somewhere around twenty is an ideal age to begin studies seriously, with the possibility of beginning studies at a younger age under the right

¹² Alexander Polishchuk, interview by author, St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

¹³ Markand Thakar, interview by author, Baltimore, 26 January 2012.

circumstances. Whether a particular aspiring conductor is the right age for a program can of course be determined during the audition procedures for the program.

1.2 The audition

The competition to gain a place in an internationally recognised conducting program is fierce, with the ratio of applicants to students accepted sometimes being 15 to 1 or more.¹⁴ Which prospective students the school decides to accept will have a significant impact on the kind of conductors that graduate from the institution. Some institutions place the primary emphasis in the audition on skills such as score reading at the piano, ear tests and general knowledge, with the actual act of conducting playing a relatively minor role in the selection process. Other schools are more interested in the skills of the candidate displayed whilst conducting, while at the same time taking into account other background skills. Thus the skillset of new students can vary enormously from one school to another. This will naturally have repercussions for the program itself in terms of what skills students need to develop through their studies, and also says something about the basic ethos of the programs themselves.

Each of the schools investigated in this study has an extensive audition procedure for the selection of students, these processes being detailed in Part Two. Whilst the mechanics of this procedure are certainly of interest, perhaps of greater importance is the question of what qualities the teacher is looking for in the candidates throughout this process. Kenneth Kiesler from the University of Michigan gives his views:

I think the number one thing I'm looking for is potential. Often there are people who conduct reasonably well and they want to come to a school, not really to learn, but for affirmation, confirmation. I'm not too interested in that. I'm more interested in people who will work, who show all of the attributes in terms of skills that one would expect from a conductor.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Part Two for further details.

¹⁵ Kiesler.

A polished exterior many not necessarily get a student into Kiesler's class. It seems he is more interested in people who may have specific qualities, even if they need a good deal of nurturing. He further defines these qualities he is interested in:

I'm looking for people who embody the music when they conduct. I find it very difficult to teach certain things. If someone is completely detached and completely cold and the face never moves and the body never moves and they're making motions in the air, they're not going to get in to this institution... It could be just a seed that I see or a kernel, but there has to be something.¹⁶

As will be discussed, Kiesler has a unique approach to encouraging students to 'be the music' and develop this emotional contact with the music. Nevertheless, he feels the need to see some form of involvement and empathy that he can begin to work with. Kiesler is very candid in saying, 'I find it difficult to teach certain things.' He implies that in those areas which are difficult to teach, he would like to see some evidence of talent or ability already visible in the potential student. Perhaps what each teacher looks for in the audition process is in a way a reflection of their views in regard to which aspects of conducting are more teachable than others. Leif Segerstam expresses similar views in terms of connecting with the music:

There has to be the personality that you see in front of the orchestra, do you see the music in the person? But mostly they perform and they conduct and we see how the hands go and if it is really terrible then you can leave them out.¹⁷

Segerstam is looking for a degree of physical co-ordination as well as seeing 'the music in the person'. When pressed on the issue of whether he feels you can teach this latter quality he replies:

No. This is what we do when we take them in... You have to see that the wonder of music is in that personality, which is not yet ripe and has not studied, but this... the glow, the musical forces which come in different repertoire and is supposed to then be ignited and inspired from the podium place, then we have to see that there is potential for it.¹⁸

¹⁶ Kiesler.

¹⁷ Segerstam.

¹⁸ Segerstam.

Much like Kiesler, Segerstam needs to see potential or a 'kernel' of this particular quality. Additionally, he acknowledges that this is largely because he can't teach it, if it does not exist initially. Johannes Schlaefli comments on what he is looking for:

It's a mixture of things. Of course I like a very good honest personality, a very good musician and that there is this urge within him or her, all these things, but that's very natural. And then in terms of conducting, I would call this thing, 'if somebody is able to touch the sound.'¹⁹

Schlaefli is not the only interviewee to use the term 'touch' in relation to sound. Much as a pianist is often said to have a good 'touch', a similar thing can be said for conductors. Essentially, a conductor can be said 'to touch the sound' if his or her gesture has a strong connection to the sound produced by the musicians. The word 'touch' implies that this relationship with the sound may occur on a very subtle level and also suggests some level of intimacy between gesture and sound production.

Markand Thakar from the Peabody Conservatory also speaks of the candidate's relationship with sound:

I look for someone who responds to sound... I mean is open to sound, allows the sound to enter, connects to the sounds and resonates with the sounds and thus can have some value added. In other words, it goes through the conductor and the net result is something more musical, something helpful to the musical process. Rather than someone who's not listening or not open...²⁰

This developed relationship with sound is something that many teachers are looking for in potential students. A student who is not listening will obviously struggle to have any kind of interaction with the sound that the orchestra or ensemble is producing. To an extent, this may come from the student's feeling of being overwhelmed at the first encounter with an orchestra, particularly in a high-pressure audition situation. However, in many cases the problem lies deeper than this. Lutz Koehler in relation to this issue comments:

Sometimes you find people who have practised it enormously, but that they don't react to what they hear from your little orchestra.

¹⁹ Schlaefli.

²⁰ Thakar.

There is always a possibility that a student may come with a thoroughly rehearsed choreography of predetermined conducting movements, and this choreography is then executed regardless of the results the orchestra is producing. The relationship between conductor and orchestra, however, should be a reciprocal one. Whilst the conductor must realise their inner vision of a particular piece of music, that does not mean he or she should simply extrapolate that vision into gesture and then conduct with the expectation that the orchestra will fully realise that interpretation. The conductor must engage with the sounds produced by the orchestra, continuously shaping and guiding them.

James Ross of the Juilliard School gives his thoughts on the audition process:

One [thing we look for] is a certain kind of physical compatibility – an ability to move, but trumped by really who has something to say. Who has some kind of musicianship in their belly that makes it feel like no matter how awkward it is right now, that person if they can find a way will make music come alive. And a lot of people can make music come alive almost in conjunction with their awkwardness as a conductor, but if that's not there to begin with...²¹

When a conductor stands on the podium, the observer should have a clear picture of what they stand for as a musician and their 'vision' of the work being performed. Someone who has 'musicianship in their belly' as Ross puts it, will be able to give life to the music in a way that another, who is simply going through the motions, cannot. This inner musical impulse is an essential quality for a conductor to have. Ross continues:

The people who didn't make it... for one reason or another, we could feel like we were just a little bored with how it sounded after five or ten minutes of them being up there and if we're bored with them in an audition setting when they're heightened and when everybody's going like this, that's not a good sign for how we'll feel about working with them over a course of a year.²²

Ross wants to be drawn in and engaged by a student on the podium, much as an orchestral musician playing under the same conductor would.

²¹ Ross.

²² Ross.

Some professors are looking for a quality that they feel is very hard if not impossible to define. Imre Pallo, formerly of Indiana University and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music is one of those:

A person whom I see that by his or her standing up there, something changes in the orchestra. Not even that they know how to do it. I am not awaiting if there is such a thing as conducting technique which I very much question... what I'm looking for is the inexplicable I think. That there is something that they are doing there which I feel as I said that the musicians react differently than just, they start playing *because*. Sometimes it is because that person confuses them, but if I see that there is a will behind it which causes that confusion, then I say, 'I can fix that', but I see something there which I believe makes a conductor.²³

This 'inexplicable' thing is something most conductors and conducting teachers can probably identify with. Pallo says, 'something changes in the orchestra'. This change is most easily discerned when a number of conductors come to the podium to do the same piece of music in quick succession. Logically, it must come about as a result of differing relationships between conductor and orchestra, and the potential reasons for this are numerous. It may be due to the student's personality, body language, gestures, use of the eyes, musical imagination, willpower, or some combination of all of these things, and perhaps others as well. Some have even suggested that the best conductors are in fact psychic, though needless to say, there is no empirical evidence to support this view.²⁴

The issue of a conductor's personality is an interesting one, as the stereotypical image of a conductor is of someone who is an extrovert, outgoing and oozing confidence. But as any orchestral musician will attest, many conductors are not like this at all. If there is such a thing as an ideal personality for a conductor, then surely this is something that must be kept in mind during the audition process. Johannes Schlaefli gives his thoughts on the issue:

More and more I start to believe that there is not an ideal personality. It can be so amazing. We had one of my students when he came, he was really a shy personality... you would have said he is a very good musician and he has a very good feeling for the sound, but I think he doesn't have this certain thing in his personality we expect a conductor has to have. He would have been

²³ Imre Pallo, interview by author, Sydney, 7 July 2011.

²⁴ *The Art of Conducting: Great Conductors of the past*, dir. Gerald Caillat, Videorecording (Hamburg: Teldec Video, 1994).

the perfect example for this. Nowadays he is a G.M.D. [General Music Director] and everybody likes him.²⁵

Perhaps the young conductor does not have to have the exuberance of a Bernstein or the natural authority of a Karajan to be successful in this day and age. Indeed, many maestros can come across as shy and even introverted away from the podium. However, Schlaefli does believe there is something that all conductors must have:

There must be somehow an urge, a fire. In German we say, 'es brennt unter den fingernägeln' [it burns under the fingernails] ... I think that's maybe the nucleus that somebody has this fire, this longing for a sound that is written down in a score, that this sound, this piece should have this and this sound concept and the urge to hear it like this and because of this, you have to conduct until you hear what you heard inside....if that's not the case then nobody should become a conductor.²⁶

In other words, a burning passion for the music itself and an unrelenting desire to hear this music played as the conductor has imagined it. Christopher Seaman concurs with the necessity for a bit of fire:

A bit of hellfire in the guts, as it's called, that has to come out. And temperament. Most people have temperament, but not everyone can access their temperament, and in teaching I always try and get them to access their temperament.²⁷

This is an important point and an area where the teacher can be of assistance. A student may have very strong feelings for the music and possess the inner fire which Schlaefli speaks of, but it may not be apparent to the orchestral musicians. The student may not be accustomed to demonstrating strong emotions in public, or it may be that the student is showing these things in their own subtle way, but needs to be more demonstrative. Undoubtedly, even students who might describe themselves as shy or reserved can develop and overcome any issues in this area, should the fire and passion for the music which Schlaefli speaks of, be there in the first place.

²⁵ Schlaefli.

²⁶ Schlaefli.

²⁷ Christopher Seaman, interview by author, Hobart, 10 February 2012.

Jorma Panula suggests that a conductor should be modest, perhaps not always a quality associated with practitioners of the art of conducting:

The best qualities are modest, but decisive. Modest and honest. And pleasant, never negative. Positive way. This is most important.²⁸

Here Panula is referring to modesty in the context of the conductor's relationship with the composer and the music itself, believing the conductor should put the voice of the composer before their own. This may also come back to a question of motivation and why the student wishes to become a conductor in the first place. Certainly the general consensus amongst conducting pedagogues seems to be that the conductor should be there primarily out of love for the music and the art form itself. Students who are there purely and simply for an ego trip will not last long. Panula also speaks about being positive rather than negative and here he is referring to a conductor's general demeanour during rehearsal and approach to the psychology of rehearsing.

Ultimately, we are who we are. As Fuchs states, 'For better or for worse, a conductor has his own personality, and that is the only one he can work with.'²⁹ But it would seem that any particular given personality type should not be an impediment to becoming a conductor in itself, the main pre-requisite being simply a passion for the music and an ability to communicate it. Indeed, perhaps a diversity of personalities is a healthy thing for the profession, as Almila says, 'It's a richness that the personalities are different and it also makes a good change for orchestras.'³⁰

Clearly there is much for a teacher of conducting to consider during the audition procedures, and the importance of making the right decisions at this stage cannot be underestimated. A school may only accept two to three new conducting students every year, and it is therefore vital that all students have the right ingredients to grow in that particular conducting program. It should also be remembered that high-level conducting programs are

²⁸ Panula.

²⁹ Peter Paul Fuchs, *The Psychology of Conducting*, (New York: MCA Music, 1969), 58.

³⁰ Almila.

resource intensive and the school is therefore making a significant investment in each student.

Ultimately, it seems that most teachers are looking for students who are able to connect with the music in some way, have clearly formed musical ideas, aren't afraid to be themselves on the podium, and are able to influence the sound of the orchestra for the better.

1.3 The conductor's instrument: the orchestra

One of the greatest challenges facing aspiring conductors is the lack of ready access to their instrument: the orchestra. Whereas a violinist or pianist can practise and interact with their instrument at any time of their choosing, the conductor is often forced to make large compromises and make do with whatever resources might be available. As Stringer points out:

There's no way to learn conducting or study conducting in a vacuum. Conducting is an art of reaction and communication. You have to have someone reacting to you or else you don't know if your beat is working.³¹

Leading Australian conductor and educator Graham Abbott concurs with this view:

Something that's audible that will respond to the gesture is what you need. Conducting in silence is good, in my opinion, to a point, because to develop clarity of gesture is very important. But then you need to quickly get to the point where you have to get some reaction to those gestures. You've got to find out what works.³²

An orchestra, by definition, is constituted of a significant number of people, with even a small chamber orchestra still requiring the gathering of around twenty instrumentalists. Professional orchestras of any size are unlikely to take a chance on a conductor who is unproven and is still very much a student of the craft. Putting student conductors in front of a

³¹ Stringer.

³² Graham Abbott, interview by author, Adelaide, 3 November 2010.

student orchestra is also problematic, as these students have an understandable expectation that they will be trained by a professional. Leonid Ginsberg, long-time conducting professor at the Moscow Conservatory has expanded on this point:

Student orchestras should be trained by fine professional conductors who can really teach them - not by students. And conducting students should have a professional orchestra to work with, an orchestra which will play exactly what the young conductors show with their hands.³³

For any conductor training program, the issue of what to give conducting students to practise on is a huge one and is without doubt one of the fundamental challenges facing a conservatory or music school setting up such a program. However, all of the institutions examined in this study have been able to find some form of solution to this issue. The ideal solution, of course, is simply to give the students a full-sized professional orchestra with which to work, as suggested by Ginsberg above. However, this is naturally very expensive, and in today's budget conscious tertiary education sector, an extremely rare thing indeed. Perhaps it is not surprising that the only school that comes close to this is in Russia, where labour is still relatively cheap and unions are not as well established. The St Petersburg Conservatory has provided a professional orchestra for the use of conducting students since the 1960s.³⁴ 'The conductor's orchestra', as it is known within the school, plays for three hours in the morning, six days a week during term time. A more common approach is that which is found at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. There, a chamber orchestra of around twenty-five players is formed from current and recent students, with those students being paid an honorarium. The orchestra is thus less expensive than a fully professional orchestra, but still provides the conducting students a good level instrument on which to practise. For the instrumentalists playing in the orchestra, this is an activity that falls outside of their curriculum and is not a part of their studies, but nevertheless also gives them the chance to expand their repertoire. A similar system exists at some other schools around the world, including the Juilliard School in New York, the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore,

³³ Elizabeth Green, 'On the teaching of conducting', *Music Educator's Journal* 47/6 (1961), 56.

³⁴ Leonid Korchmar, interview by author, St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Australia. In German speaking countries a common solution is to hire an existing professional orchestra for short, intense periods of work on an occasional basis.³⁵ The regularity of this contact, however, can vary significantly from school to school.

Even at the very best schools in the world, a conducting student should be very happy to have forty minutes of orchestra time a week. These minutes spent with an orchestra are therefore very precious, and most schools look for ways to prepare their students before they stand in front of the orchestra itself. For as long as conducting has been taught, the most common way of doing this has involved the student conducting two pianos, usually playing from a special arrangement of the score for four hands. Lutz Koehler, Professor of Conducting at the University of Arts in Berlin explains:

This session with the two pianos is their first meeting conducting-wise with certain pieces, because then they can try out all of their mistakes - to do that with an orchestra is too expensive. For example, the fundamental questions of upbeat, or which upbeat for that or that or that. This is a preparation for conducting an orchestra, it's not a replacement.³⁶

This more informal setting with two pianists as opposed to an orchestra is therefore a good place to experiment with different approaches, both technical and musical. Time is less of an issue, and there is the possibility of going into detailed discussions on certain points that may not be appropriate in a situation where twenty-five paid musicians are present.

However, as Koehler implies, there are limitations to what can be achieved in this setting and the degree to which two pianos can simulate an orchestra. Christopher Seaman, Artistic Director of Symphony Australia's conducting program, explains further:

We can do quite a lot, but two pianos is a very different form. In a small ensemble there are a dozen musicians, or a big orchestra, 50, 70 or 80 musicians. You're lifting a heavier animal, and therefore different skills are needed and you have to project further. You have to throw your personality over a longer distance. So you can only get so far, but you can still achieve a lot.³⁷

³⁵ Koehler.

³⁶ Koehler.

³⁷ Seaman.

As Seaman points out, the weight of the sound of an orchestra is a difficult thing to simulate with two musicians and the sensory experience of conducting two pianos, as opposed to an orchestra, will inevitably be very different. Seaman also talks about having to ‘throw your personality over a longer distance.’ This can involve the physical aspects of conducting, but equally applies to the psychological aspects as well.

Whilst two pianos may ultimately be a rather poor substitute for an orchestra, this configuration is the most common found in conducting classes around the world today, as it is practical and affordable. However, who is playing those two pianos does vary from school to school and this can have a large bearing on the quality and value of the experience for the students. Some schools, such as the St Petersburg Conservatory and the Juilliard School, have two professional pianists who play for all of the conducting classes, and this brings obvious advantages. These pianists are of a high technical level, are accustomed to following a conductor, and may even have developed the ability to ‘play like an orchestra.’ In other words, they are able to simulate the weight of the sound of an orchestra and its inherent lag in response. In Vienna, however, the students of Mark Stringer play the piano for each other. A regular class will involve five students, and at any given time one will be conducting and four will be at the piano, in this case playing from full score rather than a piano reduction. The advantage of this system is that the students are learning how it feels to follow a conductor, and at the same time are deepening their knowledge and familiarity with the score through playing it. At Juilliard a hybrid approach is taken, with two professional pianists playing an arrangement, whilst two students join them at the piano playing from full score adding extra layers of texture, perhaps bringing together the best of both worlds.

Some, however, reject the concept of working with two pianos completely, as they feel it is inadequate or, worse still, encourages negative habits. Professor Johannes Schlaefli of the Zürich School of Music is one of those who no longer believes in working with two pianos alone. He explains:

Even if the piano player is very much aware of how an orchestra sound reacts to the beat, even then the sound is too direct. It just gives the hand [of the conductor] the wrong information. When we have strings and winds and then also pianos to fill out [the score], still the main sound is *gestrichen und geblasen* [drawn and blown]. It's such a different concept of how the sound reacts to the hands, and that's what they have to get used to.³⁸

This issue of the directness of sound that Schlaefli refers to is one of the fundamental problems of the piano as substitute for an orchestra. The piano produces sound through a hammer strike and therefore generates an essentially percussive effect. Though this can no doubt be tempered in the hands of a talented player, it is a far cry from the many possibilities that an orchestra is capable of producing. In short, the sound of a piano will always begin with some form of attack, whereas the sound of an orchestra will more often than not have a rounded beginning. Kenneth Kiesler, Professor of conducting at the University of Michigan is another who finds the two piano solution a source of frustration:

It's very limiting because we can't deal with so many issues, you know, balance and blend and intonation and all sorts of things that we can't do fully... everything's percussive, there's no sustaining, there's no line or little line. Not very productive. When I teach in programs where they use exclusively two pianos, I find they don't know very much about string colour. They're not aware of breathing issues and articulation and how intonation effects balance and how balance effects intonation, all of these things that we can do with different players.³⁹

Kiesler's observations on other schools' piano-based programs where he has taught as a guest are interesting. The implication is that these students are losing a large part of the picture of what it is to be a conductor and what their full responsibilities are on the podium. In a situation where a school relies solely on pianos, great care must therefore be taken to ensure that students are fully aware of all the issues involved in the functioning of an orchestra that they are not able to experience directly. Perhaps with careful guidance and by attending orchestral rehearsals as observers, such students can overcome at least some of these problems. Both Zürich and Michigan instead use a small ensemble of five to ten players, reinforced by one or two pianos.

³⁸ Schlaefli.

³⁹ Kiesler.

In Helsinki, the Sibelius Academy also avoids having two piano sessions. Instead the students all bring their respective instruments to a special preparatory session and play for each other. Jorma Panula points out that:

On the piano with two players or four players, the sound is a dead sound. Is it a string sound or winds together? A small ensemble is much better. Three different instruments playing is better than four people playing the piano. Having strings is most important.⁴⁰

In addition to working with some form of small ensemble, the student may spend some time with his or her teacher conducting in silence, simply imagining the music in their heads and moving their arms without having anything in front of them with which to interact. Opinions are divided as to whether this is a worthwhile exercise or not, but most teachers seem to feel that something can be gained, particularly if the student in question is encountering specific challenges relating to the physical aspects of conducting. This work tends to be done on a one to one basis, as circumstances require it. Markand Thakar observes, 'What you can do in silence is gain physical control.'⁴¹ The acquisition of physical control is of course hugely important to a conductor's work. In order to develop this control, many pedagogues give their students short exercises or drills which they can practise in their own time on a regular basis. These exercises may develop the student's flexibility and awareness of their limbs and fingers, or may develop their ability to utilise their two hands in different ways simultaneously.

Ultimately, most schools deliver their teaching through a combination of work with two pianos or small ensemble, and work with an orchestra of some form. However, the balance and specifics of how these are combined does vary significantly from school to school, as will be detailed in Part Two. Once the student is standing in front of a gathering of musicians of some form, the lesson may begin.

⁴⁰ Panula.

⁴¹ Thakar.

1.4 The physical aspect of conducting

It is the physical aspect of the conductor's craft which is most apparent. Musicians playing under the conductor need to know when and how to play through the information given in the conductor's gestures and, ideally, they should be drawn in to the atmosphere and general mood of the piece as a whole. Whilst verbal instructions may be given to the musicians in rehearsal, in performance, all the conductor has to communicate with the musicians is their physical presence. Over the years a system of beat patterns has become the established norm and these basic beat patterns are where the absolute beginner conductor normally starts his or her work. These can be used to establish tempo and give a pulse enabling the musicians to play together. But as Christopher Seaman states:

Moving your hands around with the right patterns in the air is not conducting. The feelings in your heart, the rhythm in your guts and the knowledge in your mind have to get in to your hands.⁴²

Beating time in itself says absolutely nothing about the music, and so the conductor must develop a gestural vocabulary with which to communicate their innermost thoughts and feelings, hopefully, in a way that the players will be able to read instantaneously.

A common school of thought defines the right hand as being the 'time keeper' whilst the left conveys more musical qualities, but even this is at best a gross simplification, if not a complete falsehood according to some. Learning to conduct effectively is a very different thing to learning a musical instrument. According to John Carewe, English conductor and teacher of Sir Simon Rattle:

The great error which most musicians make is that they think of conducting in the same way as they think of their instrument. An instrument is a dead, inanimate object, and you have to master it. And because all instruments are more or less designed the same way, there are techniques which are universal. You can show a violinist how to use the bow. You can show a pianist how to use the fingers, always within certain parameters... but conducting has absolutely nothing to do with a physical technique in that

⁴² Seaman.

respect. I mean, we have to use our bodies because that's our only means of communicating, but there is no such thing as a technique.⁴³

A violinist or a pianist is interacting directly with a physical object that has a standardised size. A pianist will always have to stretch the same distance to play a particular interval no matter which piano they happen to be sitting at. The conductor's challenge is altogether different and the physical possibilities he or she can use to communicate are essentially infinite, bound only by their own physical limitations. There are no keys to press – conductors must simply find a way to communicate with the musicians in the most effective way they can. How a conductor interacts with an orchestra is ultimately rather personal and can often be difficult to describe. Thakar comments on a phenomenon often observed by conducting teachers:

There's something that happens to the sound, from a conductor to the orchestra that I don't understand. That I don't know if you can understand.... we had ten conductors and I had each one just conduct the same eight bars and it was notably different. Same players, same room, same teacher – the sound was different. The music making was different and so there's something that you can't explain.⁴⁴

This phenomenon is best observed in the laboratory setting of a conducting class, as it is rare to have the opportunity to hear the same music performed by different conductors with the same orchestra in a short period of time. The majority of the differences in sounds produced in this setting are of course perfectly explainable, but there can also be some surprises – the conductor who produces the best results with two pianos may not be the one who produces the best results with an orchestra. No doubt the fact that at some level the interaction between conductor and orchestra is almost indefinable is one of the things that has led people to say that conducting cannot be taught. Nevertheless, conducting is taught at a very high level around the world and it is worthwhile to take some time to examine how conducting pedagogues approach the physical aspect of conducting. Now that the student

⁴³ John Carewe, interview by author, London, 21 September 2011.

⁴⁴ Thakar.

has some precious time standing in front of a group of musicians, how does the teacher work with the young conductor to heighten their ability to communicate with them?

Perhaps it is worthwhile to begin with an examination of two pedagogues with approaches at opposite ends of the spectrum. Musin and Panula have been two of the most successful conducting pedagogues in the last fifty years. Coincidentally perhaps, they were virtually neighbours as they taught their courses in St. Petersburg and Helsinki respectively. However, their pedagogical approach to the teaching of the physical aspects of conducting could not be further apart.

Musin taught at the St Petersburg Conservatoire for over fifty years, teaching many of the most famous Russian conductors alive today in the process. Although he passed away in 1999, Musin's legacy and teaching methods are continued by former students, such as Alexander Polishchuk and Leonid Korchmar, and internationally people often refer to the 'Musin School' or 'Musin Method'. Over his years of teaching in St Petersburg he developed a very specific system of conducting, largely based on a very detailed analysis of the function of upbeats. His system is unique in the history of conducting and is one of the few examples where a detailed, prescribed physical system has created a long list of high-calibre performers such as Yuri Termikanov, Semyon Bychkov, Valery Gergiev and Tugan Sokhiev, to name a few. Musin believed the ultimate challenge of conducting was to combine expressivity with rhythmic precision, believing the two often get in the way of each other.⁴⁵

Panula, on the other hand, takes a very free approach to the physicality of conducting and according to many of his former students, has no particular method.⁴⁶ Whilst Panula has a few basic rules, such as good basic posture and making sure gestures are not larger than necessary, he prefers to use the student's natural instinctive way of moving as a starting point and helps them to develop that in such a way that they retain their own unique individual style. Panula says:

⁴⁵ *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, dir. Vitaly Fialkovsky, DVD (St.Petersburg: Compozitor Publishing House, 2006).

⁴⁶ Anu Konttinen, 'Conductor Education in Finland', *Finnish Music Quarterly*, 3 (2006), 50-53.

I treat everyone as an individual. They have different nervous systems – some are quicker, some slower. So they should not beat like me. Not at all, but clear. What is two what is three? Everyone has their own style little by little and should not copy or imitate big maestros.⁴⁷

Another feature of the Panula approach is the extensive use of video as a tool for analysis. In fact, most of his teaching is done after an orchestra session watching the video with the student, rather than while they are in front of the orchestra. The use of video as a tool will be discussed in detail later as indeed will Panula's claim to having 'no method'.

For most teachers, the best approach seems to lie somewhere in between the detailed approach of Musin and the level of freedom espoused by Panula. Schlaefli comments on his approach:

On the one hand I try to be free and I take it as a compliment that sometimes people say that my students look very different from each other in the way they conduct. But on the other hand there are things that I believe are the same for everyone. It's part of a body language that the left hand palm up is always an inviting gesture. And if someone is not aware that if he tries to encourage a group to play louder and the palm is down, that this doesn't speak. It's like the wrong vowel in a word. That's for everybody.⁴⁸

This gesture to which Schlaefli refers is a form of basic body language, and it will carry the same connotations on the podium that it would in any other situation in society. Hence, these universally understood gestures could be said to be 'for everybody'. Of course, how they are used and in what context could be very personal. Schlaefli gives another example:

If someone conducts very small and goes down with his beat a lot, then he is so much out of the contact field of his eyes that the musicians will not pay attention to the beat anymore... That's for everybody. I believe there are principles which apply to everyone. But for me, this is the challenging and interesting aspect of this profession. To find this line between the principles that the student has to learn and understand and the individual way of this student. That's for me the really fantastic and fascinating thing about teaching conducting.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Panula.

⁴⁸ Schlaefli.

⁴⁹ Schlaefli.

This dichotomy between building a disciplined structured technique that will work for everyone, whilst at the same time nurturing the student's unique musical personality and methods of communicating that personality, is surely one of the great challenges facing the advanced teacher of conducting. There is always a risk that by insisting on some technical rules regarding the physical movements, a teacher may inadvertently suppress an indefinable something that gave the observer a window in to what kind of a human being that conductor is and what they feel about the music at that particular moment. This could be as subtle as those aspects of body language which help an orchestral player empathise with the conductor and make a connection on a human level. This is an issue far more important to conductors than for instrumentalists, as the instrumentalist is not required to empathise with their instrument, given that it is an inanimate object. Ultimately, this is something that an astute teacher must judge on a case by case basis, and as Schlaefli alludes to, there are things that are 'for everyone' and can be considered universal.

One such universal issue that most teachers seem to agree upon is that the student should have a grounded stance and not move around too much, so that the focus of the players remains on the hands and the eyes rather than the torso. Mark Stringer elaborates:

I'm very strict that they stay fairly still. I say at some point: yes, use everything you have and do move around, you're not going to be a soldier, but before you move around you have to have a sense of grounding, because the more you move around the more diffuse your centre is... Bernstein – people say that he moved around a lot. Not true. He was like a dancer. Simon Rattle also uses his body like a dancer, he's always conscious of where his pivot or fulcrum is, the centre of his weight.⁵¹

Whilst some famous conductors may seem to be highly mobile and not at all grounded, they may in fact be in complete control of what they are doing. At any given moment they are able to be completely still and focused should the situation demand it. This is in stark contrast to a student whose extraneous movements are uncontrolled and are not contributing anything to the music, but are instead diluting their own musical message. Mark

⁵¹ Stringer.

Stringer, himself a protégé and student of Bernstein gives us a fascinating insight into the great maestro's approach to teaching:

Bernstein, when he taught, hated his own technique. He knew what was good about it, but as a teaching tool, he hated it... He said, 'Don't imitate me, it works for me and it just doesn't work for you.' And what he was always teaching was the Fritz Reiner technique, in a really bizarre way, completely channeling Fritz Reiner. Everything was small, everything was minimal, everything was with the eyes, everything was very cut and dry. And now twenty one years later I realise why he had to teach that – he was going back to his ground work. The kind of thing that he could pull out of thin air if he wanted to.⁵²

Fritz Reiner was renowned for his focused, workmanlike technique, whilst Bernstein will long be remembered for his active podium presence. But as is alluded to above, underneath the flamboyance (and indeed grounding it) was a solid, conventional, clean technique, and this is what the student must have in his or her possession before allowing themselves complete freedom. Panula also speaks of keeping things small and focused and reminds us of another conductor of Reiner's generation:

...watch how you can make more clear and smaller... Never bigger! It's not necessary. Old maestro Szell was very small. You can see this year after year – what is necessary, [but] what is NOT necessary – even more important.⁵³

George Szell had a similar reputation to Reiner for his clarity, precision and economy of gesture. Many young conductors bring a great deal of energy to their work, but through trying to do too much at once, inevitably lack focus. Hence, students may need to go through a process of distillation and refinement, or as Panula puts it, understanding 'what is necessary' and 'what is not necessary'; taking all of the excesses away until what is left is the conductor's musical intentions in their most pure form.

Much of the discussion in a class naturally focuses on the conductor's hands. Generally speaking, the hands are the focal point of the conductor's energies, but how the two hands should work together is an important point for discussion. When the two hands are both

⁵² Stringer.

⁵³ Panula.

simply beating and offering the same information, this is referred to as 'mirroring'. For many conducting pedagogues, conducting in such a way is unsophisticated and limits the expressive possibilities of the conductor. Musin was certainly against this approach:

There is nothing so dangerous to the expression of gestures as the sameness of movements. If your left hand in its parallel motion, simply copies the right one, it can destroy everything. Here we have an interesting example. Take an example from *Swan Lake*; the corps de ballet is dancing, we enjoy the exact steps by the dancers. If, however, the soloists would do the same moves, it would be stupid. Mirroring is a parody of conducting.⁵⁴

Musin's comparison with the world of dance illustrates the point well; if the soloists move in the same way as the rest of the company, they in fact will not be soloists at all. If the movement is different, on the other hand, it grabs our attention. A common view is that the right hand should provide the beat in the form of the conventional patterns, whilst the left is free to be expressive and shape the music. Segerstam gives his views on the different roles the two hands should play:

I hate to see right hands that are not calligraphically natural and looking like a piece of nature, like a tree... I expect that the left hand is not waving symmetrically in the same movements as the right, it is almost like a monitor, that you feel the atmosphere, the motivation, the mood or... of course it can also be a warning thing – not yet, but now! Giving entrances and so on. The left hand can be really versatile, but the right hand has to be as calligraphic as the Chinese characters.⁵⁵

Segerstam's is a commonly held view. He is renowned for expecting his students to have a very 'correct' right hand in terms of the beat patterns, and it is this to which he is referring when talking about the need to be 'as calligraphic as the Chinese characters'. Seaman has similar views regarding the role of the left hand:

You know the story of the boy who cried wolf? That story applies to the left hand. If the left hand is moving around all the time and doubling the right, no-one's going to look at it. But if you can find somewhere to park it and use the right on its own some of the time and then when you want something, bring the left in to action, the orchestra will notice it and react to it.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, dir. Vitaly Fialkovsky, DVD (Saint-Petersburg: Compozitor Publishing House), 2006.

⁵⁵ Segerstam.

⁵⁶ Seaman.

Less can sometimes be more when it comes to using the left hand effectively, and indeed, many inexperienced students try to do too much, and end up simply overloading their players with information.

However, not everyone agrees with this division of the roles of left and right hands, some find this approach rather simplistic and limiting. Kiesler takes a less rigid approach with his students:

I'm not dogmatic about the left hand, I don't say it must be independent, you never mirror with the left hand or anything like that. There are times that mirroring is very effective. It feels more solid because it's symmetrical and it feels good and it looks good and there are times when it's completely inappropriate and you need the independence of the left hand. So we work on the independence of the left hand.⁵⁷

This issue of independence of the hands is of course not exclusive to conducting, but a common issue for many instrumentalists, as any elementary piano student can attest to. Much like a pianist, this independence may take some time for a conductor to develop and become natural. Kiesler also has a more flexible viewpoint regarding the precise responsibilities of the right hand:

When I was growing up I learned, be really clear with the beat pattern in the right hand and be expressive with the left hand. I don't believe that. I think we should fill the right hand with as much music and shape and line and colour as we can, and we use the left hand to either add more or to do something different. You can do more than one thing at the same time.⁵⁸

Kiesler clearly sees a danger in prescribing a specific role for either hand. Whilst the right hand may be the primary way of indicating the pulse of the music, it can also express a great deal about the character of the music at the same time, and be an expressive instrument in itself.

Of course, the roles of the hands in communicating musical expression is just one aspect of conducting technique. The hands and arms are part of the complex physiological

⁵⁷ Kiesler.

⁵⁸ Kiesler.

system that is the human body, and the body can in no way be left out of our discussion. On a basic level, we must acknowledge that any movement of the hands or arms must ultimately originate from the body itself. As such, it is essential that any negative issues relating to the body must be addressed. Many teachers speak of body tension and the need to rid the body of it. Koehler comments:

The first thing is be relaxed. Second, if you are relaxed, have enough musical tension inside, but don't be tensed body-wise. This is, I think, the secret of conducting.⁵⁹

The body needs to be in a position to take on various states of musical tension as required by the music, and in order to achieve this, its most basic state must be one where the muscles are relaxed. When one is relaxed it is possible to add tension, but if one is naturally tense then it is extremely difficult to relax voluntarily. The issue of musical tension and the physical representation of that in a conductor's being is an important one, as this is an essential ingredient in the conductor's ultimate quest to become a physical manifestation of the music itself.

Many teachers talk about 'being the music', with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Carlos Kleiber and Carlo Maria Giulini often cited as being good examples of this. These conductors seem to radiate the music from their physical being. This has long been thought of as an indefinable quality, and therefore very difficult, if not impossible, to teach, and is perhaps one of those abilities that conductors are expected to be born with. Some teachers simply encourage their pupils 'to be the music' or say things such as, 'I want to see the music'. This makes the student aware of what is lacking, but many may need more help than this to overcome the problem. One teacher who has a very specific approach to tackling this challenge is Kiesler. He details his thoughts in this area:

The face is usually an outgrowth of what we're feeling inside. So you first have to feel something, and then the body shows what you feel – this is the way it is in real life – and then it comes on the face. And that could be nearly instantaneous, but it has to be in the body. I learned a huge lesson about this – actually it was a confirmation – at the Rodin Museum in Paris. In the back

⁵⁹ Koehler.

of the Museum there are these huge gardens and all of his outdoor sculptures are there. Almost none of them have heads and the ones that have heads have no faces. You know exactly what each one of them is feeling, and you know that by how the body is. The contortion, the muscle tension, the stance, the weight – extraordinary. So the body has to be involved and it's a big part of what we do here: to become aware of how the body's put together, how it works.⁶⁰

Kiesler stresses the importance of the body, not only as the source of movement, but as the origin of physical manifestations of feelings and emotions. He describes how he works with his students to encourage these feelings to emanate from the right place:

In order to feel something you have to at first be vulnerable. That means you have to stop putting on a show. You have to stop having mental chatter. You have to become available to what the music says to you... so there's practice to be done off the stage... We do quite a bit of work at the keyboard where I play, I improvise certain things and people are free to respond how they wish with the body and the face, and feel, before there's any gesture. And then to have the gesture grow from the connection.⁶¹

Kiesler's approach in this area is unique and is certainly a departure from the more conventional approaches found in most European schools. We are now crossing in to the realm of psychology, and the issue of how and what we feel and how this manifests itself in both our emotional and physical beings will vary from individual to individual. Can we teach someone to feel an emotion? The answer to that question lies beyond the bounds of a mere musician's thesis, but Kiesler's emphasis on allowing ourselves to be 'vulnerable' and 'available' bears serious consideration.

To allow ourselves to give in to the music is not always an easy thing to do when our minds are so busy dealing with the other aspects of conducting. In the moment of performance these other issues must become so superfluous that only the music is present. Of particular importance, is the conductor's knowledge of the score being performed. Not only must the conductor be well aware of what the composer wrote, but how and why it was written in this way and what the composer was trying to say. In other words, as well as

⁶⁰ Kiesler.

⁶¹ Kiesler.

knowing the score the conductor must have a fully developed interpretation or 'vision' of the piece. Without this, the conductor is merely a glorified automaton.

1.5 The score

According to Tanglewood legend, Serge Koussevitsky was often heard to preach: 'To become a good conductor you have to do three things: study scores, study scores, study scores.'⁶²

For most musicians, the first time they open an orchestral score there is a sense of being overwhelmed. Instrumentalists are accustomed to reading from one or two staves of music at a time. However, an orchestral score can easily contain thirty staves, intended to be digested and understood simultaneously. The conductor has the additional problem that the music cannot be learnt with an instrument in hand as can an instrumentalist. The preparatory work must all be done before giving the first upbeat, and at this point the music must be fully absorbed. Panula is clearly an advocate of the Koussevitsky position on this point:

Most important: study the score, study the score. If you can do this and you know it by heart, then you can have contact with the orchestra.⁶³

Much like the physical side of conducting, different teachers take varying approaches to how they encourage their students to approach a score. Some simply leave their students to find their own way through trial and error, whilst some insist on a systematic approach that may involve various forms of analyses. Others vary their approach completely from student to student, as each individual will possess a different set of tools to tackle this challenge.

Schlaefli takes this latter approach. He explains:

I try to go through that [score study] with every student, but more on an individual level because they are so different and they bring such different experiences. So with some it's a chat of five minutes and I see, 'Ahh you do

⁶² Schlaefli.

⁶³ Panula.

that way, this way, this way.... that's all fine. Go ahead.' I know then that he has his tools to discover a score and they are good tools. And with others I see they know some things to a certain point, but with other things they need some advice on how they should go on in studying the scores, and then we take more time... but I don't do score study as a general thing: everybody comes to that class, we have five classes and then you know the five steps how to learn your score. I don't do this.⁶⁴

Schlaefli has a relatively small class in Zürich consisting mostly of postgraduates, with students coming from many different parts of the world. Given this diversity, a flexible, individual approach makes much sense. James Ross from the Juilliard School Music in New York also has the luxury of a small class of students, and accordingly allows his students a good deal of freedom in the way they approach a score:

A couple of my colleagues I know, actually I admire them for that, have the twenty-five steps you have to take in order to know a score. You go once through like this and once through like that, check the instrumentation etc etc. Wow, OK! And maybe if that does work, it's the result of twenty-five times through anything is probably going to be helpful to you in a certain way. But I'm a little bit more along the lines of Celibidache saying – You just start reading at the beginning and you get to the end, and you've missed most of what the piece has said. But the next time you go through you start to notice: 'Oh yeah, there's that little articulation point, I think this is the same thing that happened back there.' And like a string that vibrates as one, it starts to also vibrate in little smaller parts and then you start to drink in and look at a more minute level and you find this moment where what's happening on the minute level seems to have something to do or play a role with how the structure is swinging at the largest level, and you know at that point when you've got the small stuff and the big stuff aligning or mirroring each other, as long as it's a good piece of music that has those kind of relationships, that you're actually understanding what the piece is doing. And I subscribe to that without being more specific about what they have to do.⁶⁵

For Ross the most important thing is to spend a good deal of time with the score, and to be alert and attentive to what the composer has written and is trying to achieve. The emphasis here is on the need to read and be observant, and to gradually digest more and more details as the work gradually imprints itself on the individual. Of course, the stronger the general musical education and background of the student, the more they will be able to digest. In contrast to the relatively intimate working environment at Juilliard, Stringer has a very large

⁶⁴ Schlaefli.

⁶⁵ Ross.

group of students under his tutelage in Vienna, and although the age of students varies, the program is at the undergraduate level. As such, many of his students may be of a relatively young age and the range of abilities he is working will inevitably be broad. He therefore takes a more disciplined approach and has a system that he recommends to his students:

You ask the score four questions. First of all you ask what is on the page. What is there, when it was written or what keys or what instruments or... just seeing the piece with your eyes as opposed to seeing it with your ears... is there a dance form behind it? What kind of dance was it? The second question is something that I picked up from Bernstein and MTT, is looking at it as a composer – why is it there? Why did the composer choose that note as opposed to this note? Parallel to that is the third question - what makes it special? Why do we have to perform the Haffner symphony some 200 years after it was written. Why do we have to perform that music but we couldn't really care less about the Christian Bach symphonies. Is there something that makes it unique, is there something that speaks for all eternity there? The fourth question, that you dare not forget before you go in front of an orchestra, is how does it function. How does it work? Is it in four is it in eight – the practical things.⁶⁶

If followed through in full, a student will be well-equipped using Stringer's approach.

Although it may be time consuming, there can be no doubt that the right time in a conductor's career to do this in-depth work is at the beginning, when they are devoting all of their time and energy to studying the art form. A student who graduates with a thorough knowledge of the core repertoire will be well equipped to tackle the challenges of the profession. Certainly, the student who is at the beginning of their journey and finds themselves unsure how to go deeper in to a score could do far worse than to adopt Stringer's method as a starting point, and to develop and refine it over time to suit their own particular needs. Other students who come to a conducting program with more experience may have already developed their own approaches, and thus not need such a system.

Kiesler likewise believes in a rigorous approach to score study and takes a keen interest in how his students approach that. He recalls his own experience as a student:

A huge influence on me, and on many conductors, was Julius Herford, who was a great pedagogue of not just conductors but musicians at Indiana University for decades, who taught Foss and Bernstein and Robert Shaw and many, many others. And that's centred in score study, that's centred in a real

⁶⁶ Stringer.

patient, in depth, in between the notes, under the notes kind of study and that's a crucial part of what we do here.⁶⁷

A fairly common piece of advice given to students is to start with the big picture of a piece and to gradually break it down in to smaller details. To start with the larger framework and deal with issues such as form and slowly work back to the functions of individual chords. This would be a normal approach in an analysis class, and indeed most of the schools examined as part of this study insist on their students taking some form of analysis class as part of their course, thus equipping the student with some very useful tools to work with. However, formal analysis is just one part of the process of score study, and cannot give the conductor everything he or she needs to know. Kiesler likes to take a different approach to his study and work from the details outwards to the bigger picture.

You hear this frequently – you look at the big picture and then you divide it up in to the equivalent of plays, in to acts and scenes and monologues and dialogues and so forth, so you get smaller and smaller. That's one way to do it. I actually prefer to start with the detail and work out from that. So, not too detailed, but phrase structure – is it four bars, is it four times two, is it four plus four is it varied, is it the same – comparing things... I mean, any repetition is always helpful to us, it gives an insight and then adding it up and looking at the bigger picture, then I see these eight phrases add up to this section, and so forth. And then I think there's no question that it includes harmonic analysis. Maybe not functional always, but to always know the chord and what the chord is... To sing or play every note. If one can do that all at once, fine. If three parts, two parts.... horizontally as well as vertically, just so you sing or play the flute part all the way through, patiently even though you really want to be playing more parts.⁶⁸

Kiesler says, 'to sing and or play every note'. How a student achieves this will depend very much on their abilities as an instrumentalist, and in particular how developed their piano skills are and whether or not they are masters of the art known as 'score reading'. This is the art of rendering a piece of music at the piano in real time, reading from the full orchestral score, rather than a piano reduction. Stories abound of musicians, particularly in opera houses, who can play complex scores by the likes of composers such as Richard Strauss with seemingly little or no effort. This is a special and unique talent that not every student

⁶⁷ Kiesler.

⁶⁸ Kiesler.

can be expected to possess. However, even for a student with relatively poor piano skills it can still be beneficial to sit at the piano and play things from the score in whatever way possible. This helps to develop familiarity with the different clefs and transposing instruments that exist in a score, and can help the mind to think polyphonically. Obviously, being a good score reader can be a useful tool in the score study process. But it is no silver bullet, and some believe there are dangers in relying on this approach too heavily. Pallo comments:

I find that the piano can also get between you and the score, because you are so worried where your fingers go. I personally believe that you should learn a score by sitting down in your chair and reading it, hearing it and learning it. That's how I learnt and I think this is the thing. Don't play a recording, don't put a technical problem between you and the score... you can go to the piano, if it seems to be a difficult chord and you think your ears don't give it back exactly: 'Aha! that's how that chord sounds.'⁶⁹

It is worth noting that Pallo makes these comments as a pianist who was schooled in Vienna and came up through the German opera house system. Another point that Pallo makes is: 'Don't play a recording'. This is an important and at times controversial point. We live in a technological age where media of all kinds, including recordings, are freely available. In the time of Mahler, if you wanted to hear a piece in the comfort of your own home you had to either sit with the score and 'visualise' it in your mind or play it yourself at the piano. Today, we simply have to press the play button, an infinitely simpler thing to do that requires no skill whatsoever. If used appropriately recordings can perhaps be beneficial, but there are dangers facing the student who relies on them too heavily. Opinions amongst conducting pedagogues differ as to the optimum use of this resource. Panula comments on the dangers:

Individuality is most important. Do not listen too much to records and DVDs and so on. The score, also one hundred years ago, the score was the only thing. It was all. Don't imitate people. Not at all. This is most important.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Imre Pallo, interview by author, Sydney, 7 July 2011.

⁷⁰ Panula.

Ross concurs with Panula's position on this matter:

They do have to avoid listening to other people's performances when they're studying a score... Otherwise it's too easy. A crutch to get information in a way that has already been digested through somebody else's musical being and as creative as that musical being may be, it's better to do your own bad version, like Carlos Kleiber says, of your own thing, than a regurgitation of somebody else's.⁷¹

One of the dangers in relying on recordings too much is that not only will the student learn the score itself from the recording, but will learn somebody else's interpretation along with it, whether he or she is conscious of it or not. The other, perhaps even more fundamental danger, is that students will be tempted to make recordings their *only* study tool and therefore fail to discover the benefits of digging deeper in to the score in a search for its inner meaning, and from these discoveries, develop their own personal view of the piece. It seems fair to say that every conducting teacher has encountered students like this at some point in time, if not on a regular basis. Mark Stringer comments:

I just find so many people who are just quickly learning a piece and who are learning it now with their iPhones, not even iPods... and no-one knows what a CD is anymore.... And so they're learning it from that.⁷²

The temptation to use recordings as a crutch or a shortcut is not just limited to students. . . Erich Leinsdorf in his highly respected book *The Composer's Advocate* begins his text by telling the story of how he discovered that a well-known American Music Director was learning his repertoire from a record player:

We talked a great deal, and when we retired after luncheons I could hear through the wall the music from his portable phonograph. Often the same side (four minutes and twenty seconds in those years) was repeated over and over. By the time my neighbour departed I had figured out that these sessions with the Victrola were preparation for his winter season's repertoire. I was twenty-two, green and provincial, and yet my original awe at having met a real chief conductor of an American orchestra turned into puzzlement. Why should a man of such eminence need to learn his music from repeated

⁷¹ Ross.

⁷² Stringer.

hearings of other performers? Forty years later such a discovery no longer surprises me.⁷³

But surely we cannot ignore this resource completely. Whether teachers like it or not, today's students have ready access to a vast number of recordings through websites such as Youtube, Naxos Music Library and download services such as iTunes. So what is the most constructive way to make use of this library of performances past? Schlaefli gives his views:

At the beginning I think it's a good thing that we have this nowadays [recordings]. Even if you have a very good eye and can read the scores well, it's good to have a klingendesbeispiel – an example that sounds. It's a good thing at the beginning. And then I think there should be a time with absolutely no recordings and then the student should make the piece his own. It has to be eaten and digested and then it has to be in the body somehow. So when you start to feel that now the piece starts to speak to me, and now I discover it has to be like this – Then is the interesting moment to go back to recordings. Then it's about what other solutions do we have in the world.⁷⁴

For Schlaefli the recording can be a useful tool to introduce us to the piece, and to help us to get to know its sound world. However, there then comes a period where serious study must be undertaken without this aural aid in order to become more intimately familiar with the material presented by the composer. Schlaefli's advice to listen to recordings after this intensive study process is quite common, and often comes with the proviso to listen to a large and varied selection of recordings. Kiesler relates that during his studies with Carlo Maria Giulini he asked for his view on this point, and his response was, 'Absolutely [you should listen], it's like having a masterclass with all these great conductors'.⁷⁵ Larry Rachleff from the Rice School of Music in Houston shares this approach:

I try to get them to be very strong with their own analysis, score study, image, point of view, and then maybe to listen to lots and lots of recordings, rather than just one or two to emulate.⁷⁶

⁷³ Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate : A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 1.

⁷⁴ Schlaefli.

⁷⁵ Kiesler.

⁷⁶ Larry Rachleff, telephone interview by author, 19 January 2012.

It is safe to say that the vast array of recordings that exist today can be of great use to the aspiring conductor, but only if used in the right way and at the right time.

One final issue worth considering in relation to recordings is rather particular to the twenty-first century. Whereas the twentieth century saw the development of high fidelity recording and playback equipment, our current century is notable for the return to 'lo-fi' consumption of audio media, particularly for the younger generation. This is a direct result of the dissemination of music recordings via the internet, and the rise of devices such as the iPod. Today even the iPod itself seems like yesterday's idea and many students turn to resources such as Youtube when they want to hear something. Mark Stringer makes an important observation in pointing out the trend towards low fidelity listening and how this is leading to a loss of concept of sound:

There is a sense of figuring out what a Ravel sound is as opposed to a Debussy sound, as sensitive as that. Where does the sound occur in the orchestra and how do you produce that? The sense of the Stokowski 'klangmischung' [sound mix], to have a palette and that is absolutely what I miss from the people today with these lo-fi devices. The iPod and iTunes generation and the Youtube generation – that is even worse. This generation, some of them have never bought a CD. There are people now who are so young, that they have never downloaded music. If it's not on Youtube, they're not interested. And so the Youtube generation, where it doesn't bother them that the sound is out of sync and that the sound is coming from tinny little laptop speakers, and it's distorted. And that is I think the greatest loss. These people go in front of an orchestra and they accept how the orchestra sounds instead of trying to make it better.⁷⁷

Students who develop in such a lo-fi environment will have a poorly developed sound palette, and will not have ears sensitive enough to be aware of subtle changes in texture. Of course, the best way for them to develop their palette is to regularly attend performances and rehearsals of high quality orchestras. This should be encouraged.

In addition to this loss of a sound culture, Youtube comes with the added complication that it provides easy access not just to recordings but also to videos of performances. Thus, there is not only the temptation to inherit somebody else's interpretation, but even their physical gestures.

⁷⁷ Stringer.

Whilst the increasing availability of audio and video recordings of performances may be a double-edged sword for the aspiring conductor, the affordability and availability of video cameras can undoubtedly be a useful tool for analysis, whether it be recording a performance, a rehearsal, or a class.

1.6 The video-camera as a pedagogical tool

The existence of the video camera gives the student an opportunity to view their conducting from an external, objective point of view that would otherwise not be possible. Panula was the first major conducting teacher to introduce this technology to his conducting class and use it as a pedagogical tool. To this day, video analysis is a fundamental part of the teaching process at the Sibelius Academy, with Segerstam continuing Panula's approach in this area. Almila speaks of his years in the conducting class using what was then primitive technology:

It was about '75 when the videos came and of course the system was very different, you could watch them only in the Sibelius Academy, you needed lots of lamps, it was black and white, it was clumsy, it was very difficult to use.... But Jorma's basic ideas about videos were that if there's an argument that, 'no I didn't do'... 'let's watch'... Anyone who sees themselves in a video is a little bit ashamed or afraid - 'Oh, do I look like that!?' But then when you get used to it you can start to use it analysing properly. You can listen to it at home or watch it with the sound off and see if you still understand where you are... or if you are an orchestra musician, put it on and try to play one part, and you notice very quickly where it's hard to see.⁷⁸

Almila raises a number of interesting points here, not least that Panula was so keen to embrace this technology even when it was in its infancy. He relates that if there were ever a disagreement between teacher, student and orchestra about what was really happening in a given situation, the video would show the truth to all. It often happens that a conductor feels they are showing what they want, but does not get the result from the orchestra that was desired. It could be that the conductor's intentions were very clear and the orchestra simply didn't respond for whatever reason. But more likely, it may be that whilst the conductor felt

⁷⁸ Almila.

they were showing something very clearly, in actual fact that particular gesture or impulse was not readable for the orchestra. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a conductor to be completely objective about these things when on the podium.

Almila points out, the first time a conductor sees themselves in action is usually a shock and can be hard to watch. But the serious student can quickly get over this initial shock and begin to use it as a tool to see what is really working and what isn't. It can be used to address purely technical issues, and also to see whether things like atmosphere and the conductor's own feelings in relation to the music are something with which the orchestra can engage. Panula comments on the importance of video in his teaching:

It's important to watch yourself on the tape, therefore video is more important than teacher. So it means you can yourself watch. Critically watching your own conducting. Therefore sometimes we only have 15 or 20 minutes with orchestra, so I don't make some lecture and use people's time. Conduct, conduct! Only some 2 seconds... hey watch there. Letter C is wrong - listen. And later on the tape, we see.⁷⁹

To say that 'video is more important than the teacher' is a very strong statement indeed and gives us a fascinating insight into the way Panula views his role as a teacher. Panula also refers to the preciousness of this time working with an orchestra and his preference not to give a 'lecture' which would take up valuable time. For him most of the teaching occurs after the rehearsal whilst watching the video, leaving the student free to interact with the orchestra for the maximum time possible. This method has the added advantage of allowing the student to develop a relationship with the orchestra in a similar way to what they may encounter in the profession. This is an important point as the relationship between conductor and orchestra can be a delicate one. Segerstam comments:

It is more important that they really have the free time to be in front of a living orchestra and that's where they actually learn... this interplay of breathing, looking, interacting with the body language and then it is so sensitive, you feel the difference immediately, depending on who stands there in the front. So having the video allows them to see for themselves, what I am quickly in not very many seconds... I say one, two, three things and I don't interrupt

⁷⁹ Panula.

them even if they are really bad, because then we can see here [in the video].⁸⁰

Segerstam also prefers not to interrupt too much when students are working with the orchestra. Another advantage to the teacher taking something of a back seat in these sessions is that the orchestra themselves may begin to view the person on the podium as simply, 'the conductor' as opposed to, 'the conducting student'. This again can lead to an experience for the student which is closer to what they will encounter in the profession.

However, not everybody shares Panula and Segerstam's enthusiasm for the video recorder and its active use in class. Whilst at the Sibelius Academy every orchestral session is automatically followed by a video analysis session, no other school investigated in this study uses video to such an extent. Indeed, some teachers prefer not to use it at all as they believe it over-emphasises the visual aspect of the art. Pallo is one such individual:

I have a problem with mirrors and videos because it's not a ballet. It is there [on the podium] that you have to see what you are doing, because that is what you are doing. You can't pose. If you are videoing and looking at the mirror you will pose.... How do I look? Do I look pretty? Is it OK? Does it do this? While I think it's action – reaction. And that's the only way you can practice that, neither in the mirror, nor with video.⁸¹

Pallo is correct to point out that one shouldn't conduct for the camera, and that there is a danger of unnecessary showmanship being introduced, rather than focusing on what matters. Stringer is another who prefers not to use video as a pedagogical tool. He explains:

When they're being filmed, it's like having a second professor in the room, and giving contradictory advice usually. They will never see the same student that I see. And so they start making diagnoses and they start fixing things on their own – not necessarily with the same diagnosis that I would make, and so I find myself then correcting their corrections as well as the original problem, and I just find that it slows the work down as opposed to speeding it up.⁸²

⁸⁰ Segerstam.

⁸¹ Pallo.

⁸² Stringer.

This is a very interesting viewpoint, and Stringer acknowledges his stance is unusual.

Panula himself believes that the act of watching the video and learning from it is a skill in itself that requires practice, and this is probably why he insists on always being present for the video review sessions.⁸³

It seems fair to say that the majority of teachers either use video as a pedagogical tool occasionally, or allow their students to videotape things themselves, thus adopting an approach somewhere between that of Panula and Stringer. Christopher Seaman is one of those who uses it occasionally and insists on having all orchestral sessions recorded, but does not rely on it too heavily:

There's one little caveat I have on videos. There are certain things that make you really you. And they are the very things that when you see them will probably embarrass you the most. And the danger in looking at a video is that to make yourself satisfied with what you see of yourself, you throw away something that is essentially you and in your personality and you can slightly water it down to a bland acceptability to yourself. We're all quirky, and when we see our quirks we don't like them usually.⁸⁴

Just as the teacher who takes an overly dogmatic approach to the physical aspect of conducting may undermine the individuality of the student, the latter watching a video may be tempted to do the same. Schlaefli uses video in his classes in Zürich, but takes a more selective approach to when it is used in comparison with his Finnish colleagues:

When I started I did [use video regularly], but nowadays I don't use it so strictly. Because sometimes I discovered for some students there are periods where it's better not to be confronted too much with this image.... On the one hand it's a truth, but to go down a new path, to really change into something new, can mean that in the first moment it doesn't yet feel good, and it needs time to grow. And if in that moment the student is confronted with the video.... I also encourage students to watch the video with some distance. Sometimes I also say, 'This doesn't look good on the video, but I remember in the hall, musically, it was right.' So don't worry too much about how it looks. I think there is a certain danger.⁸⁵

⁸³ Anu Kontinnen, *Conducting Gestures: Institutional and Educational Construction of Conductorship in Finland, 1973–1993* (PhD dissertation, University of Helsinki 2008), 124.

⁸⁴ Seaman.

⁸⁵ Schlaefli.

Whilst Schlaefli feels there are times when watching the video may not be helpful, he still believes video has a role to play:

On the other hand, sometimes we also speak a lot about rehearsal technique. How to prepare an orchestra, how to rehearse. And sometimes I really ask them – now watch your half an hour rehearsal time from this morning, and don't leave out any minute. It will be hard and sometimes you would like to just fast forward, because you are talking too much, but go through it and really experience it now from the other side and there I think they can learn so much. Where is the moment where I interrupted again and again and where should I have let them play? Where is the moment where I become unclear because I said the same thing two times, three times? Where is the moment they don't understand me because I talk too early? There I think the video is fantastic.⁸⁶

Schlaefli's observation demonstrates the versatility of video as a pedagogical tool. Whether teachers choose to actively use this resource or not, nearly all of those interviewed for this study allow students to record their sessions with orchestra and review them in their own time. This is a common practice amongst students. Indeed, Thakar observed that his class at times 'looks like an Obama press conference', due to the profusion of recording equipment in the room.⁸⁷ James Ross and Alan Gilbert at the Juilliard School take this approach of leaving video review largely in the hands of the students. This is particularly interesting as it is a conscious change in direction from what their predecessor, James DePriest, did until recently in the same school. Ross comments:

We wanted a particular atmosphere at lab orchestra that differentiates from the program that DePriest did up until now. DePriest really didn't want to give public feedback to his conductors. He thought somehow that endangered the relationship of his conductors with an orchestra and he wanted them to just get up there and be like they were real conductors running something, and he would sit and watch and then watch the tape with them afterwards, and then give them their feedback.⁸⁸

This approach of DePriest's is broadly the same as the approach taken at the Sibelius Academy. Ross continues:

⁸⁶ Schlaefli.

⁸⁷ Thakar.

⁸⁸ Ross.

Alan and I are interested in a much more active relationship where there are no holds barred, all the information is public and the orchestra needs to understand what their role is as well. So it's not just criticising the conductors and pretending the orchestra is perfect. But we're both talkers and sitting around just watching people not having a good time or flounder or have an orchestra not know quite what role they're playing seemed more dangerous to us... we want to make it fun for the orchestra too. I'd say that's right there underneath, we'd like our conductors to improve, and we want the orchestra to have more fun playing lab orchestra than they ever have doing normal concerts.⁸⁹

Ross says, 'We want to make it fun for the orchestra too'. In principle, of course, one would always hope that people will enjoy the act of music-making, whatever the context of that music-making may be. However, a conducting class is an unusual situation for an orchestral musician to be in. A regular rehearsal has the clear objective of a public performance at the end of it, so there is a clear purpose for all involved. For a conducting class, however, that particular rehearsal exists in isolation, with no further goal other than giving the conductors in training an opportunity to practise their craft. Ideally, the orchestra will feel engaged in this process and feel they, as orchestral players, have something invested in the potential benefits of this training. However, there is a danger of the musicians losing interest if they feel that problems are going uncorrected, or if they are unsure of the exact purpose of these sessions and have doubts about whether or not anybody is really benefiting from them. For any orchestral rehearsal, psychological and motivational issues inevitably come in to play and the conducting class is no exception to that. Additionally, the nature of the orchestra engaged to play for the class will undoubtedly affect the way this potential problem is approached and the way the class is run. Of course, if the conducting students are at a very high level there may be no issues at all in the first place, which is the ideal situation. In the case of the Juilliard School which Ross speaks of, the orchestra consists entirely of students and there is clearly a desire to educate these students as well as the conductors themselves. A professional orchestra, on the other hand, will not appreciate any attempts to be educated, but may quickly lose interest if they feel they are not being engaged on some level. There is an increased risk of this if the teacher is saving all comments for the video

⁸⁹ Ross.

session that follows, and if musicians see many errors going uncorrected, they may become frustrated by the situation. Ultimately this is an issue that the students and teacher together need to keep in mind as everybody involved will benefit if energy levels can be maintained at a high level throughout a class. This issue of maintaining energy and concentration levels is just one of the many skills that students will need in the real world when they must not simply conduct, but successfully lead a rehearsal.

1.7 Learning to rehearse

One of the most important functions of the conductor is that of leader during the rehearsal period, and many different skills must come together during these vital hours of preparation leading up to a performance. Now that the conductor has thoroughly learnt the score, and developed a vision of the work, he or she must realise that vision with the orchestra, whilst also helping the musicians to overcome any technical hurdles that are presented. This is not an easy thing to do well, particularly for a student who is just beginning to work with orchestras. Australian conductor Graham Abbott goes as far as to say, 'Performances are dead easy, it's rehearsing that's hard. That's in the profession the really tough thing.'⁹⁰ During the rehearsal period all of the conductor's various skills must come together to make the most of the time available, and not least of all, his or her particular qualities as a communicator and a leader of human beings.

One of the most fundamental things a conductor must be able to do is to listen attentively to the sounds that the orchestra is producing. In order to develop the level of playing, areas requiring improvement must first be heard and identified. For the novice this can be surprisingly difficult. Peter Paul Fuchs identifies a common phenomenon:

Why does it happen that a conductor who, if he were sitting in the auditorium with his score listening to an orchestra, would say at a certain point, 'The note in the second clarinet should be C, not C #', and that the same conductor remains unaware of this discrepancy when he stands on the podium?⁹¹

⁹⁰ Graham Abbott, interview by author, Adelaide, 3 November 2010.

⁹¹ Peter Paul Fuchs, *The Psychology of Conducting* (New York: MCA Music, 1969), 55.

As any conductor will tell you, it is much easier to listen analytically to an ensemble as an observer, than it is when you are actually standing on the podium directing proceedings.

According to Fuchs, Erich Leinsdorf used to explain this oft-observed occurrence as follows:

The inexperienced conductor, when on the podium, is completely overwhelmed by the situation. His heart starts beating too fast, and thus he misses the most obvious mistakes in the playing.⁹²

There are many reasons for a young conductor to be 'overwhelmed by the situation' as Leinsdorf puts it. To begin with, a young conductor who has spent most of his time up until this point conducting two pianos or a small ensemble may understandably find these early encounters with a full size orchestra intimidating and suffer from nerves. Even for the more experienced conductor, there is an enormous amount of information which the brain is being asked to process, particularly if it is the conductor's first encounter with a particular orchestra. At the beginning of the first rehearsal, a large percentage of his or her mental resources will probably be directed to how the orchestra reacts to the beat and how this basic relationship between conductor and orchestra is functioning. In order to be able to give the necessary attention to analytical listening, the conductor must be completely in command of their other responsibilities (such as communicating their wishes through their own physicality). In particular, a thorough, deep-rooted knowledge of the music itself will prove invaluable, whatever else may occur in the rehearsal. Indeed, Wilhem Furtwängler is quoted as saying;

Generally considered, there is no such thing among conductors as a good or bad ear. There is only a greater or lesser mastery of the material, that is, the score and its every detail. One can only hear individual mistakes in the complicated mass of sound when one knows completely just what the composer wanted.⁹³

Whilst many would take issue with the first part of this statement (that there is no such thing as a good or bad ear), Furtwängler's message is clear: a thorough working knowledge of the

⁹² Fuchs, 55.

⁹³ Fuchs, 56.

score and how it should sound is essential. This cannot be emphasised enough. So how can the conducting student be assisted to overcome this initial feeling of being overwhelmed? Obviously, it is partly a question of experience and the more chances a student has to conduct a real orchestra in a conducting program, the more the student will adjust to the pressures of the situation, and the sheer dynamism of the experience of conducting an orchestra. Equally, how students use their time on the podium during a class is very important and must be monitored by the teacher. If only twenty minutes or so is available per student (as is common), the temptation is to simply play a piece through, without stopping to work on things. There will be times when this is appropriate, but the student must also be encouraged to use their time to rehearse. Almila suggests, 'If you really exaggerate, make eight or sixteen bars good music, and not just run through and try to see if you can conduct this or this or this.'⁹⁴

The most important thing is that the student's ears are open and active whilst conducting. Pierre Boulez comments on his experiences working with students in a masterclass situation:

The first fault you notice is that the conductor is so preoccupied with himself that he doesn't hear what is happening. Conducting is not just a question of giving initiatives but also of being receptive to what the orchestra does. If there is not this reciprocity, a conductor will fail. You notice immediately those who conduct mechanically 'for themselves' and who are not receptive to what they hear.⁹⁵

The student conductor must control the situation sufficiently to be able to listen, and must be beyond the stage of having to think too much about his or her own physicality when in this rehearsal situation. It is worth noting at this point that the aural skills of a student can of course be developed through ear training programs, and that most of the courses examined in this study have some strategy for the aural development of their students.

Let us suppose the student has reached a good level and can hear very clearly what is going on in the orchestra whilst conducting. Depending on the level of the orchestra, the

⁹⁴ Almila.

⁹⁵ Pierre Boulez and Cecile Gilly, *Boulez on Conducting* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), 6.

student will probably hear some technical errors, and will almost inevitably hear some things which do not fit his or her 'vision' of the score. The question now is how best to help the orchestra overcome these technical problems and how best to communicate their musical conception of the work. Professional orchestras will correct many of the technical problems themselves as they will hear them immediately on the first read through. If the young conductor steps in to correct something that the orchestra can deal with itself, he or she will have wasted time and may also lose some of the trust of the orchestra, thus damaging the working relationship. However, if the conductor lets something pass that the musicians themselves cannot solve, the musicians will become frustrated and feel the conductor is not fulfilling the leadership role entrusted to them. On the finer points of interpretation there will be many things that the conductor can simply show through their hands or physical being, whilst other things may require some verbal communication. The conductor has to be careful not to talk too much, however. As Leinsdorf puts it, 'Speeches are heard but seldom listened to.'⁹⁶ Being able to express oneself clearly and succinctly is a valuable quality for a conductor to have in order to maintain concentration levels in the orchestra. Here of course we are also entering the realm of psychology, and it is often not just a question of what is said, but how it is said. Abbott suggests:

It's like a doctor developing a bedside manner, you need to develop a way to tell someone certain things, or to elicit certain information, or to obtain a certain result and you have to choose your words carefully.⁹⁷

Exactly where the right balance is on all of these issues will vary hugely depending on the expertise of the orchestra. What a professional orchestra needs in rehearsal will be completely different to what a youth orchestra requires. All of this is a huge challenge for young conductors and is often the area where they fall down when entering the profession. Giving an energetic read through of a major work is relatively easy in comparison to knowing how to draw the best out of a group of musicians over an extended rehearsal period. Several

⁹⁶ Erich Leinsdorf, *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 177.

⁹⁷ Abbott.

of the conducting professors interviewed for this thesis felt that this was an area that could be given more attention in their programs. Almila commented:

We don't have enough time to really teach them to rehearse. And to be a good rehearser is one of the biggest things in conducting.⁹⁸

Ross for his part notes that:

I would say right now from our first year, we would have more success throwing our guys up in front of an orchestra, making things fly, even a big orchestra, and it's like - 'Oh, it's a pretty good conducting program.' But I would be less sure that throwing our guys up in front of a week or two of preparation with an orchestra in a couple of different pieces - I'm not sure that we're giving them help to figure that out.⁹⁹

To a degree, the art of rehearsing an orchestra is something that comes through professional experience. Nevertheless, there are things that can be done to help the students develop in this area. One of the simplest things for an aspiring conductor to do is to observe the rehearsals of experienced professional conductors. Music schools who have a good relationship with their local professional orchestra are obviously at an advantage here in being able to provide access for the students to these rehearsals. A good example of this is the Juilliard School, which has a strong relationship with the New York Philharmonic through Alan Gilbert, and which requires its students to attend certain rehearsals at the Philharmonic. The Sibelius Academy strives to maintain good relationships with the many regional orchestras in Finland, and has been relatively successful at organising low-profile engagements for students of the program. Almila, himself the chief conductor of one of these orchestras, says:

I have myself tried to invite four top students at a time to my orchestra to give them a possibility to make a concert together. Everyone gets half an hour from the program. And this is what Jorma is also trying to encourage Finnish orchestras to do, to take more of the students, to try small things.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Almila.

⁹⁹ Ross.

¹⁰⁰ Almila.

This can be an enormous help in giving students a taste of the profession beyond the sometimes all too comfortable confines of a conducting program. When the student conducts in class, or with the 'lab orchestra', everybody in the room is on their side and wanting the best for them. This may or may not be the case in a professional situation where the dynamics will almost certainly be completely different. A group of highly-trained professional musicians are justified in having high expectations of the individual who has been chosen to lead them for a particular project, and for a public performance in which their own reputations are on the line.

The way in which a conductor interacts with the musicians of an orchestra on a human level will have a significant impact on the success or otherwise of the final performance and, with that, the likelihood of a return engagement. Here we are entering an area which many would categorise as 'unteachable'. Almila comments on his experiences in this area:

How to know how to behave with an orchestra – you can give some advice but it's hard to change a person into a good leader in front of many people, if there is not the right kind of idea in their head already.¹⁰¹

The conductor is by definition a leader on a number of levels. Indeed, the conductor/orchestra relationship is often used as a model for business leadership, with conductors such as Benjamin Zander having been very successful giving seminars in this area. Kohut and Grant recognise that this is a significant challenge, but believe that it is possible to help the student who struggles:

...there is a certain intangibility to the quality of leadership. Because of this intangibility some believe that leadership cannot actually be taught, that leadership is based primarily on innate abilities. True, some people do seem to be "born leaders." Others seem to be "good, average, natural" leaders, while still others appear to be devoid of any kind of leadership ability. Despite these facts we believe that certain concrete aspects of the subject can be identified, analyzed, taught, and learned.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Almila.

¹⁰² Daniel L. Kohut, and Joe W. Grant, *Learning to Conduct and Rehearse* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 73.

Good habits can be nurtured and students can be encouraged to speak clearly, concisely and effectively. If that is combined with first-rate musicianship, confidence, excellent knowledge of the score, and some level of gestural ability, the musicians of the orchestra are sure to respect the person standing in front of them. Whether a student is able to successfully modify their own behavioural habits will depend largely on their level of self-discipline.

Very much linked with the concept of leadership is charisma. Again, conventional wisdom suggests that it is impossible to teach someone to be charismatic, and several interviewees for this thesis stated that one thing they could not teach or give to a student was charisma. However, recent research in the behavioural sciences has indicated that, to some extent at least, charisma can be taught. Whilst nobody would claim to be able to 'teach' a young conductor to have the charisma of a Leonard Bernstein, it seems logical that a conductor's natural abilities in this area can be improved upon over the duration of even a relatively short postgraduate degree. This is an area of research with which conducting pedagogy currently has little engagement. Given it is a quality that is often expected of a conductor, it is logical for the conducting fraternity to have a better understanding of what exactly charisma is and how it functions, rather than simply referring to it as an indefinable (but desired) quality. This issue will be further explored in Part Three.

Part Two: International Case studies

2.1 The Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland

2.2 The St Petersburg Conservatory, St Petersburg, Russia

2.3 The University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, Austria

2.4 The University of Arts, Zürich, Switzerland

2.5 The Juilliard School, New York, United States of America

2.6 The Peabody Institute, Baltimore, United States of America

2.7 The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, United States of America

2.8 Comparisons and deductions

Part Two presents case studies of seven of the world's leading tertiary level conducting programs. The studies detail a broad range of aspects of the conducting programs, examining the types of degrees offered, curricula, student numbers, the functioning of the conducting studio, audition and graduation procedures, and other issues as appropriate to each school. As part of the investigations into these schools, the methods and legacies of three of the key conducting pedagogues of the twentieth century are examined: Jorma Panula, Ilya Musin and Hans Swarowsky.

2.1 The Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland

The Sibelius Academy is Finland's leading tertiary institution for music training. Originally founded as the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882, it took on its current name in honour of Finland's most famous composer in 1939. With approximately 1,400 students enrolled at any one time, it is one of the largest institutions of its kind in Scandinavia.¹ 2013 saw the Sibelius Academy merge with the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts and Theatre Academy Helsinki to become the University of Arts Helsinki, though each institution retains its individual identity.²

Historically the Academy has been highly regarded for its excellence in the fields of Church Music and Music Education, as well as general performance studies. More recently, it has developed a reputation as a leading centre for conducting studies, with a large number of graduates having gone on to have high profile international conducting careers from the 1980s to the present day. The most famous of these graduates, Esa-Pekka Salonen, has recently finished a seventeen year period as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and is currently Principal Conductor of the Philharmonia Orchestra in London. Other graduates who have followed in Salonen's path include Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo, Osmo Vänskä, John Storgårds, Susanna Mälkki, Hannu Lintu, Mikko Franck, Pietari Inkinnen and Stefan Solym.

Whilst conductor training was first offered at the Sibelius Academy in 1943, it was not until Panula became Professor of Conducting in 1973 that the conducting class began to develop a reputation beyond the borders of Finland. Panula remained in the position for two decades, not retiring from full-time teaching in Helsinki until 1993.³ Estonian conductor Eri Klas then took the reins for a relatively brief period until 1997, when Segerstam began his sixteen year tenure, retiring in June 2013. Thus, the majority of teaching over a forty year

¹ 'About the Sibelius Academy, History,' <http://www.siba.fi/en/sibelius-academy/about-sibelius-academy/history> (accessed 10 August 2012).

² 'About Us, University of Arts Helsinki,' <http://www.uniarts.fi/en/about-us/> (accessed 11 August 2012)

³ Anu Konttinen, 'Conductor Education in Finland', *Finnish Musical Quarterly* 3/2006. http://www.fmq.fi/articles/ar_2006_3_ak.html (accessed 13 August 2012).

period has been delivered by only two people, giving the institution an enviable degree of continuity. Adding further cohesion to the program has been the presence of Almila, who held the position of Assistant Professor from 1978-2006 and has continued to be involved in the course up to the present day. Following Segerstam's retirement, Almila will act as caretaker professor until a new appointment is made. As a result of its enviable track record, the Sibelius Academy is today seen as a desirable destination for many aspiring conductors, and gaining a place in the conducting program is highly competitive. The Academy offers conducting courses at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level, with students going through the same audition process regardless of which degree they are applying for.

- **Audition procedures**

Approximately forty to fifty students apply to study conducting at the Sibelius Academy annually.⁴ Applicants are first required to send their curriculum vitae and a recent video of themselves conducting, with approximately half of these applicants being selected to attend a live audition in Helsinki, spread over two days. The audition process begins with all candidates sitting for an aural examination, usually taking the form of an advanced dictation. A typical test might involve a live chamber ensemble playing a section of a piece, with the applicants then being asked to transcribe it. This is followed by a private session with the jury where they are asked to demonstrate their skills as an instrumentalist, perform elementary score reading or transposing at the piano, conduct a pianist playing one of the selected audition pieces and answer some general questions regarding their musicianship and motivations.⁵

The results of this first round are then analysed and twelve students are put forward to the second round where they work with the Academy's 'conductor's orchestra' for the first time. Two contrasting pieces are selected for the candidates to conduct, the 2013 selection

⁴ Juhani Poutanen, interview by author, Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

⁵ Poutanen.

being the Scherzo of Beethoven's *Symphony No.5* (plus the beginning of the Finale), and Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*.⁶ Six of the candidates are then selected to progress to the final round where they have more time to work with the orchestra and are encouraged to rehearse as well as playing through. The number of students who are then accepted into the class can vary considerably from year to year. This depends on a number of factors, including the standard of the applicants and the exact number of students already in the class at that time. At the end of the audition, the jury ranks the finalists from one to six, and makes a recommendation to the Rector of the Sibelius Academy as to how many applicants are accepted. Officially, the final decision as to the number of students admitted rests with the Rector, though the recommendations of the conducting professor are ordinarily adhered to.⁷

- **Degree options and course structures**

The Sibelius Academy offers a three year Bachelor of Music degree and a two and a half year Master of Music degree in conducting.⁸ In practice, however, the length of time taken to complete a degree can vary considerably in either direction, depending on the student's abilities and ambitions. It is normally assumed that a student embarking on Bachelor studies will continue directly to the Masters, in what is sometimes unofficially referred to as the five and a half year degree. Students who undertake this plan of study are not required to re-audition or re-apply to progress to the Masters level. This structure presents students with a variety of options which can be further tailored to their own personal needs and circumstances.

All students study conducting together in a group class, regardless of the degree they are working towards, and are treated as equals when they are on the podium. The only differences between the two levels lie in what classes they are required to take outside of

⁶ David Claudio, email to author, 14 June 2013.

⁷ Poutanen.

⁸ Poutanen.

their core conducting studies. Generally speaking, most foreign students undertake the Masters degree, which is focused on the practical aspects of conducting. Students of this program participate in the conducting classes and take lessons on an instrument other than their primary one. These classes are delivered in English, removing the potential problem of a language barrier. Indeed, Finnish students are themselves encouraged to speak English at all times during conducting classes.

The Bachelor student, however, is required to take a number of additional supporting subjects such as history, harmony and ear training, in addition to their conducting studies. It is worth noting that these are subjects provided for all music students, and are not at all specialised for conductors, as they are at some other institutions. As such, most of these classes are given in Finnish. Students at both levels receive credit for playing in the orchestra of the conductor's class, study a second language and enrol in electives as required. At the beginning of studies, each student meets with the administrative course director, Juhani Poutanen. Together, they decide what electives may be appropriate for the student, and design an overall study plan. Poutanen stresses that flexibility is key to the Academy's approach:

It is possible to build a totally personal kind of study plan with them; the student may want to do more theoretical studies or histories or the student may want to play more instruments or chamber music. We want to give a freedom and motivation for students to find their own way to do music.⁹

Table 1 provides an outline of the ECTS points required and the various options for study available.¹⁰

⁹ Juhani Poutanen, email to author, 10 June 2013.

¹⁰ ECTS stands for European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and is adopted by most European music schools.

Table 1. Conducting curriculum overview, Sibelius Academy of Music.

Bachelor of Music	Points	Master of Music	Points
Orchestral conducting	90	Orchestral conducting	60
Demonstration of proficiency (Final Examination)	10	Demonstration of proficiency (Final Examination)	40
Ensemble playing	9	Ensemble playing	6
Second instrument	5–9	Second instrument	5–9
Analysis of orchestral literature (Thursday preparatory class)	15	Analysis of orchestral literature (Thursday preparatory class)	10
Language studies (Finnish, Swedish or English)	4	Language studies (Finnish, Swedish or English)	4
Music theory and solfege	9	Other studies (minimum)	21
Music history	9		
Other studies (minimum)	25		
Total	180		150

Source: Personal communication with Juhani Poutanen, Director of conducting studies, Sibelius Academy of Music.

Many students enter the class at the Masters level, and as such, may not study any supporting subjects such as music theory, history and ear training. Segerstam acknowledges that things could be better in this area, but says things like ear training and analysis are not neglected completely:

..in the situation [when they are conducting], they find that they should do it because we demand that they hear and they understand the form. If they are out of it, then we will analyse it here in the video session.¹¹

Segerstam tries to deal with these issues in class where possible. At the very least, deficiencies can be identified and the student can be directed as to what areas they need to improve upon. Almila agrees with Segerstam and clarifies this aspect of the Finnish System:

If you would ask Jorma or me, you would really have much more [supporting subjects]. But then there is the thing that makes it blurry, because you expect people to be almost professional musicians when they come to the class. So they have sort of done it before, but then you notice big lacks in some abilities... there should be also possibilities to combine this kind of teaching

¹¹ Leif Segerstam, interview by author, Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

with the conducting class. For example, ear training: can you intonate this chord properly...¹²

Almila acknowledges a desire to do more in this area and agrees that some of these issues can be incorporated into the conducting class. Of particular interest is his comment that students should be 'almost professional musicians when they come to the class', and therefore will already have well developed aural skills and general musicianship. This is a key point, as historically, the Finnish system has relied on a high general level of musicianship upon entry to the conducting program. It is telling that several of the most successful graduates from the class were highly respected instrumentalists prior to studying conducting.¹³

- **The conducting class**

In the 2012-13 academic year, the Sibelius Academy had twelve conducting students, which can be said to be representative of a standard class size. The male to female ratio in the class was 50:50, which seems a healthy indicator for future gender equality in the profession. This ratio is, however, more evenly balanced than the recent norm, which has been around 60:40 for most of the first decade of 21st century.¹⁴

The ratio of Finnish students to foreign students is also split evenly at present. This has been a source of some contention at various times in the Finnish musical scene, particularly as there have been periods when the Finns have been very much in the minority in the class. In the early years of Panula's professorship the majority of students were, of course, Finns. However, as the reputation of the class has developed it has become an attractive destination for foreign students, particularly as the education is provided free of charge to students of all nationalities.

¹² Atso Almila, interview by author, Helsinki, 21 October 2011.

¹³ Sakari Oramo, Osmo Vänskä, John Storgårds and Susanna Mälkki, all held principal positions as instrumentalists with leading Scandinavian orchestras before studying conducting. Pietari Inkinnen was a prize winner at the 8th International Sibelius Violin Competition in 2000.

¹⁴ Juhani Poutanen, interview by author, Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

A normal week for the conducting class involves five three-hour sessions, during which one or two orchestral works will be examined. The first session, usually held on a Thursday morning, is a preparatory session for the week's repertoire. This involves all students bringing their instruments so that they can play for each other, there being no hired instrumentalists in attendance. Some students also play the piano, so as to fill out the inevitable missing parts. A guest teacher is usually present to supervise, and together, the class can discuss the particular challenges involved in the music being studied, and have a basic physical contact with the music as conductors. This session is informal in nature and often involves as much discussion as music making.¹⁵ Fridays and Saturdays are where the serious work occurs, with a session with the conductor's orchestra or 'Kapubandi' each morning, followed by a full three-hour session of video analysis on both afternoons. These two days are the core of every conducting student's training at the Sibelius Academy. Segerstam has led these sessions when available, although as he still has an active conducting career himself, a guest teacher occasionally leads these sessions.

The structure of these days is unique in the world of conductor training, combining the use of a highly skilled practice orchestra with the systematic use of video analysis as a basis for tuition. This has been at the core of the Sibelius Academy conducting program since the days of Panula's professorship. In theory, every moment of the morning's rehearsal can be revisited in the afternoon, with the students being able to analyse their interactions with the orchestra from an external viewpoint. In practice, some of this time is also used for discussion of whatever issues may arise, but generally, more watching is done than talking. The bulk of the teaching can be said to be delivered in this afternoon session, giving the teacher more freedom as to how the orchestra session itself is approached. Panula and Segerstam both prefer not to interrupt too much whilst the orchestra is present. Segerstam comments:

...if I then start interrupting very much then they don't come more than thirty-six bars and then they feel that they were spoiled, because to for a moment

¹⁵ In the curriculum in Table 1 this session is referred to as 'Analysis of orchestral literature'.

feel that you actually can conduct, even if you get afterwards that it is was terrible, it was better than not doing it.¹⁶

Panula introduced video analysis as a pedagogical tool as soon as the technology became available in the 1970s, despite the challenges that the early forms of the technology presented, and this has remained central to the teaching process in Helsinki ever since. Emphasising this point, the newly completed premises of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki's Musiikitalo includes a room designed specifically for the purpose of watching conductors' videos.¹⁷

Equally as important as the use of video has been the regular presence of an orchestra of sufficient quality and size to be able to realise the students' vision of the work they are studying. Again, Panula realised early in his tenure that the presence of an ensemble was essential:

Yes, we had a small ensemble first... Everybody playing, and then conducting... as quickly as possible I organised it so that we had a professional concertmaster. I had all the time professional concertmaster plus students. Important for strings.¹⁸

Panula acknowledges that the idea for having at least a small group of strings to work with in class derives in part from his own experiences as a pupil of Leo Funtek at the Sibelius Academy from 1951-1953. Funtek also strove to provide his students with a small ensemble to work with, but it seems this practice did not continue after his retirement in 1955. The size and quality of Panula's orchestra gradually increased during his tenure, though it seems an official permanent orchestra was not established until sometime around 1987.¹⁹

Today, the Kapubandi has a standard size of twenty-six players, comprising double winds, one horn, one trumpet, one percussionist and fifteen string players. Most of the players are current or recent students of the Sibelius Academy and they are remunerated at

¹⁶ Segerstam.

¹⁷ The Musiikitalo was completed in 2011 and is Helsinki's primary concert hall.

¹⁸ Jorma Panula, interview by author, Helsinki, 18 October 2011.

¹⁹ Anu Kontinen, *Conducting Gestures: Institutional and Educational Construction of Conductorship in Finland, 1973–1993* (PhD thesis, University of Helsinki, 2008), 120.

a rate of fifteen Euros per hour (approximately US\$20 as of December, 2013). Juhani Poutanen oversees the selection process for the orchestra, and works to ensure a consistent standard is maintained.²⁰ Conducting students are also encouraged to play in the orchestra when not conducting, and any missing instruments are played at the piano by a student. Whilst not a fully professional orchestra, the general standard of playing can be said to be high, and gives students a realistic sense of what they will encounter in the profession. The cost of running the orchestra has occasionally been a contentious issue within the Academy and its existence has had to be defended from time to time. Clearly, it is an essential part of the Finnish formula, and the program could not maintain its international reputation without it.

The repertoire studied in the conducting class consists mostly of orchestral repertoire ranging from works of the classical era through to the music of today. Occasional collaborations with other departments in the Academy add some extra variety, with an annual session working with a baroque specialist on early music, and some joint lessons with the choir conducting class, examining established works for choir and orchestra. The class has also been known to collaborate with the composition department, reading through new student works, and every year an intensive opera project is included, focusing on one particular opera together with students from the opera program. However, compared to a continental European training program, opera plays a small part of the students' studies and there is no ongoing work on repertoire skills or languages that would be of assistance to an aspiring opera conductor. Thus, the focus of the program can be said to lie firmly in the symphonic realm.

The repertoire for the class is chosen and published at the beginning of each semester, giving students ample time for preparation. Whilst there is normally no discernible pattern to the repertoire chosen in terms of chronology, style or orchestration, repertoire choices have sometimes coincided with performances being given in Helsinki by Segerstam. This gives

²⁰ Juhani Poutanen, email to author, 19 October 2011.

students the opportunity to see their teacher working in the real world with the same musical material they themselves have recently grappled with.

- **Connections within the Finnish musical community**

Finland is a relatively small country of 5.4 million people and typically for a country of this size, has a very close knit musical community.²¹ This is at least partly due to the fact that most musicians have studied at the same institution – the Sibelius Academy. Considering its small population base, Finland is blessed with an abundance of professional orchestras, with fourteen separate professional orchestras operating around the country. During Panula's time as Professor, he worked to forge connections with the many regional orchestras in Finland, and encouraged them to look on the class as a resource for young, affordable, conducting talent. As a result of this initiative, many students began to receive professional engagements whilst still students at the Academy. The benefits for the students chosen for this work are clear – a chance to practise in a real world environment, without the pressures of a high profile debut. Since Panula's retirement this practice has diminished to a certain extent, but it is not uncommon for the more conspicuously talented Finns in today's class to be granted such chances. Additionally, there have often been strong links with one of the two symphony orchestras in Helsinki. At various times the Helsinki Philharmonic has had ties with the class, and more recently the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra has become involved, hosting a masterclass for the Sibelius Academy students once a year²². These links are undoubtedly a strength of the Helsinki program and give the young conductors a window into the profession itself. One assumes that these ties will strengthen further, now that the Sibelius Academy, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Helsinki Philharmonic are housed together under the single roof of the Musiikkitalo.

²¹ 'Official Statistics of Finland,' http://www.stat.fi/til/vamuu/index_en.html (accessed 21 May 2013).

²² Juhani Poutanen, interview by author, Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

- **Graduation**

At the conclusion of their studies, students are required to give a final recital which takes the form of a full concert program with orchestra. Students may present their program with the Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra, but more usually, the student will have the opportunity to work with a professional orchestra. In the academic year of 2012-13, graduating students conducted their final concerts with the orchestras in Lahti, Pori, Vaasa and Kuopio. This practice gives many students the valuable opportunity to perform a serious program with a professional orchestra. Whilst it provides a vehicle for assessment, perhaps more importantly, it also gives the student a chance to showcase their talents in the professional arena. It has not been uncommon for these concerts to lead to ongoing professional relationships, which in turn, have led to the beginnings of a professional conducting career.

In the past, students have also been required to conduct a full opera performance as part of their graduation. Providing an appropriate setting for this exam has proved challenging, as since the Sibelius Academy appointed a resident conductor to their opera department, it has proved difficult to provide students with an appropriate opportunity to conduct an opera within the school. Opportunities are sought with some of the smaller opera companies around Finland, and some flexibility is taken in this area, with an opera rehearsal also now being considered acceptable for final assessment.²³

- **The father of the Sibelius Academy conducting program: Jorma Panula**

Jorma Panula's name is synonymous with the conducting program of the Sibelius Academy, having been its founder and teacher for two decades. Twenty years after his retirement, the basic structure of the program that he created remains the same. Whilst Panula has become one of the most renowned names in conducting pedagogy over this period, the man and his

²³ Poutanen.

methods remain something of an enigma. Given the long list of successful conductors he can claim as his former students, one might expect that he long ago arrived at the point where he is universally respected. However, this is not entirely the case. As Sakari Oramo points out, he has long been 'splitting opinions'.²⁴ Almila also acknowledges that some have questioned his pedagogical approach:

...there are big names who might say, 'Is there anything? Is it just a bubble?' And I remember these discussions that we had with an exchange student from Germany, and he said, 'I was in a class in Germany with Jorma and he didn't say anything'. And then all of us said, 'That's it!'²⁵

The comments attributed to the German exchange student here are certainly not atypical of students who have encountered Panula for the first time. He is a man of few words, and an outsider eavesdropping on a class could be forgiven for wondering if any teaching is going on at all.²⁶ This is in stark contrast to Segerstam who can at times be extremely verbose and doesn't hesitate to take aim at a student's perceived weaknesses. Mark Stringer has had several students who have participated in Panula masterclasses:

I've never seen him, but from all my students who've studied with him... he doesn't say very much and makes very few comments and gives you the feeling that you can pretty much get away with murder and then you realise that: No, you did learn something. So that's a master. A very zen approach.²⁷

It seems clear that at no time has he set out to establish any form of orthodoxy for conductors or conductor training. And yet, he can claim amongst his former students some of the best conductors in the world. In some circles this is regarded as something of a mystery and is an issue that is surely worthy of investigation.

According to Finnish academic and broadcaster Anu Konttinen, who has interviewed Panula on a number of occasions, he sees teaching 'as an ongoing collegial dialogue

²⁴ Susan Nickels, 'Interview: Conductor Sakari Oramo', 13 August 2010. <http://www.edinburgh-festivals.com/viewpreview.aspx?id=1586> (accessed 12 August 2012).

²⁵ Almila.

²⁶ Allan Kozinn, 'Gestures, Nods and Eyebrows to Inspire Conductors', *New York Times*, 27 February, 1998. <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/27/movies/critic-s-notebook-gestures-nods-and-eyebrows-to-inspire-conductors.html> (accessed 12 August 2012).

²⁷ Mark Stringer, interview by author, Vienna, 18 October 2011.

between the teacher and his students.²⁸ This collegial approach is a theme that comes up regularly when talking to former Panula students, particularly those who studied with him during his years as Professor at the Sibelius Academy. This collegiality did not simply apply to his relationship with the students, but was something he actively encouraged amongst the students themselves, so that the class was also a kind of 'family', and constructive discussions could be had outside of formal school hours. Kontinen makes an observation on the thinking behind this:

During Panula's period these discussions continued after the class was over, collegiality and the idea of a 'fair play' being central. What Panula wanted was to create an atmosphere in which one could get professional feedback from one's colleagues.²⁹

Panula's aim was to create a positive environment, where students can help each other, and the teacher takes on a role perhaps more akin to that of a senior colleague. In Almila's time as a student, the formal lessons at the Sibelius Academy were merely a focal point for the whole experience:

He was totally ours when he was in Helsinki and we spent also lots of our free time with him. So it was living a life, not only the lessons. We went to restaurants together or to his home. We cooked, we spoke and all of these things which would need more concentrating on, then we had time for that, because we spent so much time [together]. And following his rehearsals and other people's rehearsals. It might be that we went to see someone rehearse in the Finlandia House, so he came with us and we could immediately discuss the whole thing with him.³⁰

Thus, for Almila and his fellow students, the learning experience was a continuous process without a clearly defined beginning or end. It would be highly unusual for a busy, practicing conductor to have the time to devote to his students in the way that Almila speaks of. From 1963-1976 Panula was chief conductor of three successive orchestras.³¹ From this time

²⁸ Anu Kontinen, 'Conductor Education in Finland', *Finnish Musical Quarterly* 3/2006. http://www.fmq.fi/articles/ar_2006_3_ak.html (accessed August 13, 2012).

²⁹ Anu Kontinen, *Conducting Gestures: Institutional and Educational Construction of Conductorship in Finland, 1973-1993* (PhD dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2008), 122.

³⁰ Almila.

³¹ Turku Philharmonic 1963-65, Helsinki Philharmonic 1965-1972, Aarhus Symphony 1973-76.

onwards, however, he never took on another principal conductor role with an orchestra and seems to have shifted his attention to teaching. According to Almila:

Something happened that is not so often seen - a professor who is always there, and who considers the class to be his main work.³²

The absent conducting professor is surely a common occurrence in many institutions around the world, but it is interesting to observe that most of the courses examined in this study have a professor at their head for whom teaching is their primary activity, rather than conducting. As is implied by Almila's description of life in Panula's class, topics for discussion sometimes went beyond the subject of the art of conducting itself, or even music-making in general. Indeed, Panula has been quoted as saying that he 'taught Salonen not only music but also to read novels, appreciate art, and drink wine'.³³ This suggests that he was encouraging a rich and well-rounded approach to life itself, as well as music-making, wishing his students to be balanced human beings.

Versatility and open-mindedness were also traits that were appreciated in the class itself. Esa-Pekka Salonen is an ideal example of this kind of versatile musician – a conductor, a composer and a horn player. Salonen says this multi-faceted approach was encouraged by Panula and described it as, 'Everyone is doing everything.'³⁴ In other words, all students should be able to fulfil such tasks in class as playing missing parts at the piano during a rehearsal, be able to play their own instrument in the orchestra (and preferably a second one as well), and where necessary, make arrangements for ensembles where the full instrumentation is not available. In this way, the student is engaged not simply with their own conducting, but with the entire music making process. In another example of Panula's open approach, various guests from other professions were invited to the class from time to time, some of these being featured in YLE's eight part television series on Panula's class at the

³² Almila.

³³ Richard S. Ginnell, 'International Youth Orchestra Festival: Jaw-Droppers from Finland, Venezuela and Switzerland,' *American Record Guide*, 71, (Jan/Feb 2008): 19.

³⁴ Kontinen, *Conducting Gestures*, 110.

Sibelius Academy.³⁵ Featured guests in the series included an actor, a choreographer, a psychologist, and a sketch artist, all giving their thoughts on the role of the conductor, and the student conductors themselves, from their own specialist viewpoint. The actor talks about role-playing and what it is to 'become' someone else, the choreographer about movement, and the psychologist discusses general leadership issues. Perhaps the most surprising choice of guest, the sketch artist, produced drawings that highlighted each conductor's personal characteristics, presenting the students with a snapshot of their physical podium presence. This drew attention to the substantial differences in body language between the students, which in turn reflected their contrasting personalities. According to Panula, these differences should in no way be considered a negative, as he sees the individuality of the student as the most important thing:

Everybody is different. Different brains. So no demonstrating, no imitating. I never say what's right or wrong. They have to find the international language, speaking with hands.³⁶

This is a cornerstone of Panula's approach to teaching conducting: each student must find their own way using their own tools. It is notable that, in terms of conducting styles, no two Panula students look alike, and despite having a distinctive conducting style of his own, none of his successful students resemble him either. Sakari Oramo comments on this point:

Panula never wanted to push his own ways on the students and those students who tried to imitate him never got anywhere. What he gave was a way for the personality to speak for itself: certain technical backgrounds and psychological backgrounds, how to prepare and how to treat soloists and musicians; that I found was the most valuable thing.³⁷

These 'technical backgrounds' that Oramo refers to are the basic technical rules that Panula does insist upon, and these can be summarised relatively briefly: the student should not

³⁵ *Kapellimestarikurssi I–VIII* [The Conducting Course I–VIII], dir. Anna-Kaarina Kiviniemi, DVD (Helsinki: Yleisradio, TV1 Taideohjelmanlinja, 1992).

³⁶ Cori Ellison, 'Making Maestros for the World,' *New York Times*, 22 February, 1998. <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/02/22/arts/classical-music-making-maestros-for-the-world.html?pagewanted=3&src=pm> (accessed 12 August 2012).

³⁷ Nickels.

move around too much and must be well grounded; the orchestra must always be able to see which beat is the first in the bar; the beat should always go down rather than up (Panula refers to this as 'fishing'); the left and right hands should be independent; the wrists should be flexible; and the gestures of the conductor should be focused and never larger than necessary. Additionally, Panula always insists that students should not talk too much when rehearsing, and make their comments 'to the point' as much as possible. Otherwise, the student is free to follow their own gestural instincts. It must also be emphasised that while Panula will point out certain things from time to time, he rarely insists on anything in the way that some other teachers might. As Osmo Vanska points out, 'He's no schoolmaster.'³⁸ In Panula's eyes it is up to the students to take on any advice given, and not his responsibility to insist on anything. The onus and responsibility to develop lies with the student at all times, and Panula is merely there to give assistance. Salonen suggests Panula is interested in 'raising curiosity, and encouraging the students to ask questions, instead of explaining dogma.'³⁹ Panula never says, 'It has to be like this...', but instead, works towards creating an atmosphere and environment where the students can learn for themselves and each other, and perhaps last of all, from himself.

During his time as professor at the Sibelius Academy, Panula worked towards creating what he saw as the ideal learning environment for his students. This was an environment where students could learn and absorb information from a wide range of influences – colleagues, observing rehearsals, the rehearsal orchestra, video, and finally himself. In this environment, Panula was a facilitator and mentor, more than what some might view as being the traditional role of teacher.

³⁸ Nickels.

³⁹ Kontinen, *Conducting Gestures*, 165.

- **Summary**

A key feature of the Sibelius Academy conducting program is the flexible and open approach taken in many areas. Evidence of this can be seen in the relatively loose structure of the broader curriculum, through to hands-on teaching methods themselves. Underlying this approach is a philosophy that every student is unique, with different strengths and abilities, and therefore, should be encouraged to find their own path on the journey to becoming a professional conductor.

At the core of the program lies the twice weekly orchestra rehearsals followed by video analysis. As has already been noted, this systemic use of video analysis is unique amongst the schools investigated, and is a key feature of the program. It allows the conducting professor flexibility as to how they approach the rehearsal session, often leading to a situation where students can conduct with relatively few interruptions. This can be said to bring the artificial situation of the conducting class closer to the environment that students will encounter in the profession, as well as providing an opportunity for regular self-analysis.

The Sibelius Academy also benefits from the strong network of professional orchestras in Finland. These links provide students with an opportunity to bridge the gap between studies and the profession, either through their graduation concerts, or by doing smaller scale concerts during their studies.

Finally, Helsinki itself provides a rich environment for a young conductor to study. Though not a large city by world standards, it boasts a full time opera house, two large symphony orchestras and a chamber orchestra. Thus, students have access to a large range of performances and rehearsals.

2.2 The Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory of Music

Founded in 1862, the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory of Music has played a central role in Russian musical life, educating leading figures such as Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Dimitri Shostakovich and Sergei Rachmaninoff.⁴⁰ At the beginning of the 21st century, the Conservatory has over 1,500 enrolled students studying all aspects of classical music performance and theoretical studies.⁴¹ Despite the fall of the Soviet Union, it remains a bastion of old world culture, not just for Russia, but for Europe in general. Conducting has long been an integral part of the teaching of the school and the list of successful conducting alumni is impressive. Famous graduates from the conducting school include Evgeny Mravinsky, Valery Gergiev, Mariss Jansons, Neeme Järvi, Semyon Bychkov, Yuri Temirkanov, Alexander Lazarev, Tugan Sokhiev, Vasily Petrenko, Martyn Brabbins, Sian Edwards, and many other leading conductors.

The beginnings of the conducting program can be traced back to 1925 when Nikolai Malko became a Professor at the school and established a conducting class which he led until his defection to the West in 1929.⁴² Whilst Malko's tenure was relatively brief, he nevertheless laid the foundations for a famous conducting tradition at the school, as his pupils Ilya Musin and Nikolai Rabinovich would themselves go on to become key teachers in the program. As early as 1932, Musin began teaching conducting at the Conservatory and continued this activity until his passing in 1999.⁴³ Such a long tenure is unprecedented in the history of conducting pedagogy, and Musin's name remains irrevocably linked with the conducting school in St. Petersburg to this day. Since Musin's passing, however, it is much harder to identify a primary teacher amongst the various people teaching conducting in St.

⁴⁰ 'History of the St. Petersburg Conservatory,' St. Petersburg Conservatory, <http://www.conservatory.ru/history> (accessed 10 October 2012).

⁴¹ 'Introduction to the St. Petersburg Conservatory,' St. Petersburg Conservatory, , <http://istud.conservatory.ru> (accessed 10 October 2012).

⁴² Arthur Jacobs. 'Malko, Nikolai.' Grove Music Online, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/17557> (accessed 14 June 2013).

⁴³ Brenda L. Leach, 'Ilya Musin: A life in music', *Journal of the Conductors Guild* 25/1 (2004): 26.

Petersburg. Alexander Polishchuk, a former Musin student, is no doubt one of the leading teachers in the post-Musin era and rigorously upholds the teachings of his former mentor. Other teachers of note at the present time are Alexander Titov and Leonid Korchmar, and, until recently, Vassily Sinnaisky was also a respected member of the faculty. All are former Musin protégés. Whilst the school has no doubt undergone some change since the days of Ilya Musin and the Soviet Union, it continues to produce many fine Russian conductors and is also a popular destination for foreign students.

- **Degree options and course structures**

The core conducting program of the St. Petersburg Conservatory is a five year course, and is referred to as the 'Graduate Course Program'. At the end of these five years, successful students are awarded a Diploma of Operatic and Symphonic Conducting, which according to the Conservatory, is equivalent to a Masters degree.⁴⁴ It is, however, an undergraduate program in the sense that students can enter directly from secondary school studies. Essentially, it is a Bachelor and Masters degree combined.⁴⁵ Foreign students who have no Russian language skills and wish to do the full five year course are required to do a one year preparatory course before entering the main diploma program. This course focusses primarily on Russian language studies, but also includes conducting lessons, piano lessons, and general harmony and aural training. However, the preparatory course is not necessarily exclusive to foreigners, as Leonid Korchmar points out:

If we see that it's not so bad [in the audition] and with a little more exercise, more practice, so we have a preparatory department where we insist on a very strong course, ear training, solfège, harmony and so forth.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ 'Studies,' St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, <http://istud.conservatory.ru/node/807> (accessed 12 October 2012).

⁴⁵ Russia voluntarily joined the Bologna Process in 2003, whereby members of the European Union agreed to ratify their degree programs to a standard, Bachelor of Music, Master of Music structure. However at the time of writing in 2013, no changes have been made in this direction in Russia's Conservatories.

⁴⁶ Leonid Korchmar, interview by author, St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

For foreign students who do not wish to commit to studying for five years in St Petersburg, the option exists to do a 'Special Training Non-Degree Extension Course Program'. This can be between two and ten months in duration, and the curriculum can be tailored according to the student's particular needs. Ordinarily, a student undertaking this short course would receive eight hours per month of conducting tuition, eight hours per month of theoretical subjects as chosen by the student, and six hours per month of Russian language training.⁴⁷

Students of the primary five year program study a large number of varied subjects over the course of their tuition. Subjects studied aside from conducting include aural training, harmony, analysis, piano, score reading, wind techniques, brass techniques, string techniques, history, psychology, philosophy, orchestration and aesthetics. Foreign students continue to study the Russian language throughout the degree, and students have regular opportunities to work with the opera school as well. Table 2 shows an overview of the curriculum over the five years of study.

Piano tuition features prominently for four of the five years of the degree, though Polishchuk acknowledges that in the post-Soviet era, some flexibility is taken in terms of the level of keyboard skills expected.⁴⁸ Many of the subjects are designed with composers and conductors specifically in mind. Harmony and aural training are two such subjects, and are given particular emphasis in the early years. These classes are delivered with relatively small class sizes of three to six students, with second year harmony students also receiving additional individual tuition. Aural training is piano based, but also includes a substantial amount of singing.⁴⁹ In later years students also study non-musical subjects such as History of Arts, Philosophy and Aesthetics, giving a broader context to their studies. One can only agree when Polishchuk states, 'We have a very deep, very wide ranging educational system here.'⁵⁰

⁴⁷ 'Special training programme,' St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, <http://istud.conservatory.ru/node/822> (accessed October 12, 2012).

⁴⁸ Alexander Polishchuk, interview by author, St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

⁴⁹ Hoshimi Sakai, email to author, 19 June 2013.

⁵⁰ Polishchuk.

Table 2. Graduate Course Program curriculum, Rimsky-Korsakov St Petersburg Conservatory of Music.

Year	1		2		3		4		5	
Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Conducting tuition	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Orchestra rehearsals	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Theatre rehearsals					•	•	•	•	•	•
Piano tuition	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Harmony	•	•	•	•						
Aural Training	•	•	•	•						
Score reading		•	•	•						
Introduction to Music theory		•								
Polyphony			•	•						
Wind/Brass techniques			•							
String techniques			•	•	•	•				
History of Music				•	•	•				
History of Russian music				•	•		•			
Orchestration					•	•	•	•	•	
Analysis					•	•				
History of Arts					•					
Musical Psychology					•					
Philosophy						•				
Aesthetics							•			
Opera/Ballet Repertoire							•	•	•	
History of Orchestral styles								•		

Source: Degree Plan, Operatic and Symphonic Conducting, Department of Conducting, St Petersburg Conservatory, 2012.

Costs for foreign students range from 180,000-200,000 rubles (US\$5,700 – \$6,400 as at December 2013) per year for the five year Graduate Course, depending on the year of study. The short term Special Training course costs 18,000 rubles (approximately US\$580 as at December 2013) per month.⁵¹ Most Russian students receive a scholarship which covers their fees, as the Russian constitution guarantees students a free education if they are accepted. However, a student who is not accepted as a scholarship student may under certain circumstances pay for a place, just as a foreigner is able to.

- **The audition**

All candidates are required to sit a written examination which involves completing an extended four part harmony test, an analysis of a short piece, and various aural tests. They must also sing basic sight-singing tests and play harmonic progressions at the piano. This is considered an important part of the audition, and can play a significant role in the final outcome. Korchmar comments:

We pay a lot of attention to ears, harmony, modulation, dictation – it's traditional. And if we see that it is not good, then normally we refuse.⁵²

Candidates then conduct two pianos in a movement of their choice, choosing from a list of standard orchestral repertoire. For foreign students, the audition ends here, and if successful they will normally be admitted to the one year preparatory course. At the end of this preparatory course they may enter the five year Graduate course, providing they pass another brief conducting examination.⁵³ For Russian students who wish to enter the Graduate Course directly (and receive a scholarship covering tuition), the audition continues with a 20 minute rehearsal with orchestra, for which they must select one movement from a list of eight works. This is then followed by an interview where they must display a wide

⁵¹ 'Tuition fees for international students,' St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, <http://istud.conservatory.ru/node/824> (accessed 12 October 2012).

⁵² Korchmar.

⁵³ Hoshimi Sakai, email to author, October 20, 2012.

knowledge of the orchestral repertoire, a brief score reading test at the piano, and finally, a performance of a classical sonata and fugue at the piano.⁵⁴ It should be noted that fee paying students (normally foreigners) have a good chance of acceptance if they show a reasonable degree of competency. For local students, however, the audition process is extremely competitive.

- **The conducting class**

In the 2012-13 academic year, twenty students were enrolled in the five year Graduate Course Program. Twelve of these were Russian, whilst eight were foreigners. Three students were female (two foreign and one Russian). These numbers are considered fairly normal for the school, though there have been times in the past where there has been higher percentage of women.⁵⁵ Certainly, a male to female ratio of 17 to 3 is higher than most schools examined in this study, and it is notable that there was only one Russian female student. Russia has produced a long list of conductors of international stature, however, we are yet to see a female Russian conductor working at this level.⁵⁶

As has already been mentioned, the structure of the conductor training program in St Petersburg is somewhat complicated by the fact that there are a large number of teachers on the conducting faculty, and indeed, the faculty list seems to be in a continual state of flux. For the academic year of 2012-13, the school officially lists six conducting professors as being faculty members: Alexander Titov, Alexander Polishchuk, Alexander Dimitriev, Alexander Alekseev, Vladimir Altschuler and Mikhail Kukushkin.⁵⁷ Though not appearing on the official list of conducting teachers at the St Petersburg Conservatory, Anatoly Rybalko and Leonid Korchmar also teach conducting, though primarily to foreign students.⁵⁸ This

⁵⁴ 'Conducting,' St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, <http://istud.conservatory.ru/node/841#symph> (accessed 12 October 2012).

⁵⁵ Sakai.

⁵⁶ It should be noted that several international female students have studied in St Petersburg and gone on to make successful careers, most notably the British conductor Sian Edwards.

⁵⁷ 'Conducting faculty,' St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music, <http://www.conservatory.ru/node/71> (accessed 16 October 2012).

⁵⁸ Hoshimi Sakai, email to author, 16 October 2012.

approach of having a relatively large number of teachers on faculty at any given time is standard practice in St Petersburg, and has been established for a long period of time.

Polishchuk observes:

It's another system, because normally in the West you have one professor or maximum two professors, like in Vienna. We have had here since the Soviet time another system.⁵⁹

This system of multiple teachers seems to date back to the 1930s and is unique amongst the schools investigated in this study. The obvious advantage to this approach is that the conservatory itself can educate a large number of conductors, whilst maintaining relatively small class sizes. In the Soviet era, the conservatories of St Petersburg and Moscow were the two leading centres for conducting studies, and may have been under pressure to produce a substantial number of students who could then work throughout the Soviet Union. Another advantage of the Russian system is that students have some choice in who they study with, and can also watch other teachers' classes for alternative points of view. Estonian conductor Arvo Volmer studied with Ravil Martynov in St. Petersburg in the 1980s and remembers six teachers being active at the time. He recalls:

I spent a lot of time sitting in Musin's classes and trying to get tips, how to help myself in my way of trying to construct my own way of conducting. When it was possible, I also always went to Jansons' classes.⁶⁰

This cross-pollination of conducting ideas between teachers is still encouraged today. Ilya Musin and Nikolai Rabinovitch, arguably the two leading teachers in the school's history, were far from rivals, and encouraged this open learning, as Polishchuk underlines:

Musin and Rabinovitch were friendly, and so it was like two professors but one class. The pupils of Rabinovitch sat in Musin's class and watched and digested some things, and Musin's pupils attended the Rabinovitch class and listened to his ideas, to his lessons. So it was interwoven, a collaboration.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Polishchuk.

⁶⁰ Arvo Volmer, interview by author, Adelaide, 22 June 2011.

⁶¹ Polishchuk.

The period in the 1970s when both Musin and Rabinovitch were teaching at the conservatory, seems to have been a golden time for the institution. The only other school investigated in this study with more than one distinct conducting class is in Vienna, where two professors operate. This merging of ideas, however, is not encouraged in Austria.

The majority of conducting tuition is delivered with students conducting two staff pianists from the Conservatory. This was Musin's preferred method of teaching and has been the norm in St Petersburg for many generations. As a result of this tradition, the school is in the fortunate position of having a pool of pianists at its disposal who are accustomed to the special requirements of playing in the conductors' class: they are able to follow well and, to the extent that it is possible, able to simulate the weight of an orchestra. Students are entitled to two individual lessons a week of around forty minutes working with this two piano formation. Though these are officially referred to as individual lessons in the curriculum, it is common for the entire class of a particular teacher to be present, thus creating an atmosphere not dissimilar to a masterclass. Like many other current practices in the school, this can be traced back to Musin, who insisted on having all students present at all times.⁶² It is also worth noting that there is often a great deal of flexibility in the exact duration of these sessions, with many teachers giving extra time where needed.⁶³

In addition to the classes with piano, a student can expect an average of about forty minutes of podium time with orchestra per week.⁶⁴ The Conservatory is in the unique position of having a resident professional orchestra primarily for the use of the conducting students. This ensemble, usually referred to as the 'Conservatory Symphony Orchestra', has full wind, brass and percussion sections, and a complement of approximately twenty-five string players.⁶⁵ Although the rate of pay is not considered high compared to other orchestras in St Petersburg, it is nevertheless a fully professional orchestra. The orchestra works six days a week, for three hours in the morning. Thus, students have a generous

⁶² Polishchuk.

⁶³ Sakai.

⁶⁴ First year students can expect less than forty minutes per week, but this is made up for later in their studies.

⁶⁵ Timothy Buzina, email to author, 16 October 2012.

amount of time available to practise with a real instrument throughout their studies. Records are unclear as to the exact date this orchestra was formed, but it seems to have come in to existence at some point in the 1950s.⁶⁶ Despite being the only full time professional orchestra in existence for the express purpose of training conductors, its existence is not well known outside of Russia. Certainly the Soviets did little to publicise its existence, perhaps preferring to keep their methods for training their cultural ambassadors to themselves.

Repertoire studied in the course begins with works from the classical era and extends to the present day. However, the primary focus of the course is on the established classics of the orchestral repertoire. One aspect that does make St. Petersburg's approach to repertoire unusual is that each student has their own personal repertoire plan. This is in contrast to most conducting programs, where students study works that have been pre-selected by their teacher together as a group. One advantage of the St. Petersburg approach is that repertoire can be tailored to a student's specific needs at their particular stage of development. But this is not the only positive, as Polishchuk observes, recalling his own experiences in Musin's class:

It was not possible, even after five years of conducting, to conduct in front of Musin all repertoire myself. Not possible. But I watched a lot. For example I never conducted [for] Musin the first symphony of Beethoven. Never myself. But during five years [of study] I watched maybe three or four times.⁶⁷

Students observing the lessons are being continuously exposed to a broad repertoire, well beyond what they themselves are studying and presenting. They are thus able to learn about their teacher's approach to a particular piece even though they may never conduct it themselves in class, and thereby broaden their general repertoire knowledge.

⁶⁶ Leonid Korchmar, interview by author, St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

⁶⁷ Polishchuk.

- **Graduation**

Throughout their studies, students have a conducting exam with orchestra at the end of every semester (with the exception of the end of first semester which is with pianos). This culminates in their final year of studies with what is known as a 'state examination'. The examination is in two parts, and consists of a public performance of a complete opera with the Conservatory's opera department at the Rimsky-Korsakov Theatre, as well as a full public symphonic concert, normally with the Conservatory Symphony Orchestra. If students already have professional engagements outside of the school, these external performances can also be assessed and act as their final examination.

- **Ilya Musin and his legacy**

Any investigation into the conducting program of the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music would be incomplete without detailing the enduring influence of its longest serving and most famous pedagogue, Ilya Musin. As well as educating several generations of Russian conductors, he created a detailed, systematic, approach to teaching conducting that is still used in St Petersburg today.

Due to the political circumstances in the Soviet Union, Musin (who was Jewish), never embarked on a fully fledged conducting career of his own, but instead devoted his life to his pupils, and to a detailed analysis of the art of conducting and how it should be taught. We are fortunate that Musin chose to document his quest in the form of several books published during his lifetime, as well as a six hour video documentary made a few years before his death.⁷² The most important of these books, *The Technique of Conducting*, was initially published in 1967, but underwent several transformations before appearing in its final form published in 1995.⁷³ This book goes into a remarkable level of detail in all aspects of

⁷² *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, dir. Vitaly Fialkovsky, DVD (St. Petersburg: Compozitor Publishing House, 2006).

⁷³ Ilya Musin, *Tehnika Dirijirovaniya [The Technique of Conducting]* (St. Petersburg: Dean-Adia-M), 1995. An English translation is currently in preparation by Oleg Proskurnya.

conducting, particularly the technical aspects of physical technique. At the core of Musin's philosophy was his belief that the greatest challenge for a conductor is to 'overcome the conflict between giving a beat and giving clear indications of musical expression.'⁷⁴ According to Musin, the addition of musical expression to a beat all too easily distorts its rhythmic precision, whilst a clear beat in itself is in danger of destroying this same expression. His approach attempts to solve this dichotomy.

To a large extent, Musin's system of conducting revolves around a detailed understanding of the role of the upbeat, with a range of different kinds of upbeats being defined and given specific musical functions. Musin speaks of each beat of the bar as having its own upbeat:

The within the bar upbeat is a gesture that connects the beats of a bar. It's the main means of communicating the conductor's ideas about the music to the orchestra.⁷⁵

Former Musin student and assistant Leonid Korchmar explains further:

For us it is very important what is between the beats. How we feel this - it's very important. The second thing is, we can say we prefer not to beat sound, but in some way just to take it. This supports the breathing apparatus.⁷⁶

Korchmar talks here of 'taking the sound' and the Musin approach is very much concerned with quality of sound production, through well prepared upbeats and the 'breathing apparatus' referred to by Korchmar. Musin's system is also unique in that it takes into account the delay in sound production that is often observed in the playing of professional orchestras, and incorporates this in to the conductor's technique. This involves what he calls a 'reverse upbeat':

If someone is always fifteen minutes late for appointments, just arrange their appointment to be fifteen minutes earlier, and it will not count. In this case the conductor should wait for the orchestra to come in not at the bottom of the

⁷⁴ *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, DVD.

⁷⁵ *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, DVD.

⁷⁶ Korchmar.

beat but higher. It's all because the orchestra want to see the whole beat, not just the upbeat.⁷⁷

Effectively, he encourages the student to factor into his or her technique that the orchestra will play not on the bottom of the beat, but somewhere on its upward progression away from the ictus. Korchmar says, 'It's like you are a commander, a leader who is going a little in advance of the troops. If you are with them, among them, so you are not leading.'⁷⁸

During his lifetime Musin was often accused of being simply a teacher of technique, and indeed, it is almost inevitable that a reader of his book will come away with the impression that it is a technical manifesto, and an intimidating one at that. However, this does not seem to be an entirely fair assessment. Musin himself states in the closing pages of the work:

Throughout the book, I tried to describe as completely as possible the technical and expressive approaches of the art of conducting... At the same time, it was repeatedly emphasised that the preoccupation with the technical aspects of conducting, which is disconnected from the conceptual and creative content of music, is dead.⁸⁰

Students who studied with Musin are consistent in their affirmation that Musin was not just a teacher of technique, but also, if not primarily, a teacher of the music itself, with technique playing a supporting role. Semyon Bychkov said of his experiences in Musin's class:

He paid attention to everything, from your posture to the way your arms moved and how your eyes looked. But the primary concern was the expression itself.⁸¹

Musin did not hesitate to stand on the podium himself and demonstrate to his students potential solutions to their problems, both technical and musical. Tuomas Hannikainen, one of the few Finns to study in St Petersburg, says:

He was a small man, but he was 50 kilos of music when he was conducting and he demanded that from everybody. There was no time beating, he

⁷⁷ *Conducting lessons of Professor Musin*, DVD.

⁷⁸ Korchmar.

⁸⁰ Musin, *Tehnika Dirijirovaniya*, 564. Transl. Proskurnya.

⁸¹ Leach, 24.

couldn't stand that. It was always very intense involvement in the music making.⁸²

One of the paradoxes of the Musin school has always been that despite his detailed, descriptive approach to the way a conductor should move, very few of his students look alike when conducting, or indeed look like their former teacher. Perhaps the most successful of his pupils working today who retains many of the hallmarks of the 'Musin technique' is Semyon Bychkov. However, if one then examines the conducting of Valery Gergiev and Yuri Termikanov, one could be forgiven for being surprised that these three men all came from the same system. Where a connection between the three can be identified is in their intensity of music making, and it seems that this is the hallmark of a mature Musin student, rather than any particular physical mannerisms. Equally, the application of his system seems to have varied to a certain degree from student to student, and in any case, was less dogmatic than one might suspect after reading *The Technique of Conducting*. According to Bychkov:

...he still took into account that every person has their own physique and personality... He was able to appreciate the capabilities and the mental constitution of a particular student. And then he could help this person to achieve what he or she wanted, as opposed to producing another model off the assembly line.⁸³

Musin himself affirmed this when referring to a conductor's 'distinctive gestural handwriting':

Such differences are not only possible but desired. It is precisely this originality of the manual resources applied by each conductor which makes an impressive and potent impact on the performers.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, beginning students in Musin's class were thoroughly drilled in the basic technical principles of his method, and there can be no doubt that he was a very demanding and exact teacher. Alexander Polishchuk, currently a Professor at the St Petersburg Conservatory, tells that in his first year as a student Musin would stop him in almost every

⁸² Tuomas Hannikainen, telephone interview by author, 29 October 2012.

⁸³ 'Russian roots,' <http://www.semyonbychkov.com/closeup.php>, (accessed 2 November 2012).

⁸⁴ Musin, 8. Transl. Proskurnya.

bar. When working on Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, Polishchuk brought the score to class a total of seven times before finally meeting Musin's high expectations.⁸⁵

For beginning students, he recommended the use of Beethoven Piano Sonatas for the study of basic conducting techniques. In *The Technique of Conducting* he states:

The advantage of these excerpts before other works is primarily in the brevity of the material... and yet contains a large number of various strokes, indications of the dynamic, etc. It is much easier to find examples in sonatas where only one technical element of conducting technique could be applied. Finally, in the early stages of mastering the techniques it is advisable not to deal with the score but with the piano part. The student is not distracted by overseeing the score and can focus on the required motions instead.⁸⁶

Interestingly, this is a similar approach to that taken by the Japanese pedagogue Hideo Saito in his book *The Saito Conducting Method*, where short excerpts from the piano repertoire are recommended for practising specific conducting techniques.⁸⁷ Though Saito's book is probably the only comparable work in the conducting literature in that it presents a very detailed description of a specific approach to conducting technique, the approaches themselves could not be more different. Given the complexities and specificity involved in both schools, beginning with simplified musical material seems to be of some advantage.

Musin developed a comprehensive method of conducting that provided a physical framework for conductors to express their inner musical thoughts and impulses. Russian conductor George Erzhemsky in his book, *To the Conductor of the 21st Century*, compares the development of a conductor's technique to a child learning to speak, and this seems an appropriate analogy for the Musin method.⁸⁸ A child may know exactly what they wish to express at a given moment, but must first equip themselves with the complex physical apparatus that is human speech before they can precisely communicate their thoughts. So it is for the aspiring conductor, who may have strong feelings for the music and a well-formed

⁸⁶ Musin, 567. Transl. Proskurnya.

⁸⁶ Musin, 567. Transl. Proskurnya.

⁸⁷ Hideo Saito, *The Saito Conducting Method*, Wayne Troews (ed.) (Tokyo: Min-on Concert Association, 1988), vii.

⁸⁸ George Erzhemsky, *Dirijeru 21 Veka. Psiholingvistika Professii*. [To the Conductor of the 21st Century: The Psycholinguistics of the Profession], (St Petersburg: Dean-Adia-M, 2007).

musical vision, but first must find a physical language with which they can communicate with the orchestra. Ideally, this language will be as broad and well nuanced as any spoken language, and this was clearly Musin's aim. Though he did not have a major conducting career himself, he wrote in his memoirs towards the end of his life, 'I conduct at the Kirov through the hands of my pupils.'⁸⁹

- **Summary**

The current conducting program of the St. Petersburg Conservatory owes much to its long history and rich heritage. It can readily claim to have been one of the world's leading centres for conductor training for the greater part of the twentieth century, with many leading teachers having been faculty members, and the introduction of a professional orchestra for students to work with at an early stage. The program continues to be attractive to students in the twenty-first century, largely because of the continuing presence of this orchestra, as well as the detailed broader curriculum which has been built over an extended period of time. In many ways the conducting program as a whole can be considered to be a living relic of the Soviet era.

After a tenure of over sixty years, perhaps it is inevitable that the figure of Ilya Musin still casts a long shadow over the teaching of conducting at the conservatory. Having been one of the few pedagogues to create a system of conducting and detail it in writing, this inevitably serves as a context for all teaching that follows after his passing. Currently, the school has many professors of conducting, but none that can begin to approach Musin in stature. One hopes that this situation will change in time, and a new figure will emerge who can maintain the proud traditions of the St Petersburg Conservatory and lead the school into the twenty-first century.

⁸⁹ Leach, 24.

2.3 The University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna

The Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien) can trace its roots back to the formation of the Vienna Conservatory in 1817. In 1909, it became the Imperial Academy of Music and the Performing Arts, broadening its scope to subjects beyond music. It officially became a University in 1998, and in 2013, provides tuition to approximately 3,000 students. The University is divided into twenty-four institutes, one of these being the institute for conducting.⁹⁰ The school has a long history of conductor training with a conducting course first being introduced in 1909, thus making it the oldest school examined in this study.⁹¹

In 1946, Hans Swarowsky was appointed Professor of Conducting, a position he held until his death in 1975. These years are generally regarded as being a golden era for the school, with a significant number of students who studied under Swarowsky going on to have major careers. Graduates of particular note include Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado, Mariss Jansons, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Giuseppe Sinopoli and Ivan Fischer – all conductors at the very top of the profession. Today, the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts remains a popular destination for aspiring conductors. In terms of student numbers, it is the largest tertiary level conducting program in the world by a substantial margin, with sixty to seventy students enrolled at any given time.⁹²

The school has a policy of having two conducting professors on staff of equal rank, with Mark Stringer and Uroš Lajovic currently filling these roles. In 2012 Lajovic officially retired from the school after twenty-one years of service and at the time of writing, a search is underway for his successor. However, he continues to teach his existing students until they have all finished their degrees, and a replacement is not expected to be appointed for some time. Yuji Yuasa and Simeon Pironkoff are also key members of the conducting faculty, and

⁹⁰ 'Organisation and History,' <http://www.mdw.ac.at/ID/35> (accessed 14 September 2012).

⁹¹ Harold Farberman, 'Training Conductors' in José Antonio Bowen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 251.

⁹² Mark Stringer, interview by author, Vienna, 18 October 2011.

act as assistant teachers to Stringer and Lajovic respectively. Other professors of note since the time of Swarowsky include Karl Österreicher (1969-1992) and Leopold Hager (1992-2004).

The conducting course is offered as a five year diploma program in two stages – the first diploma stage being completed after two years, followed by a further three years of study for the second diploma. Students who complete both stages are awarded the degree of ‘Magister artium’ (Mag.art), which can be said to be the equivalent of a Masters degree elsewhere. However, students can enter the course directly after secondary studies, hence the first diploma stage of the program can be considered to be at the undergraduate level. As such, the previous experience of applicants to the program can vary widely.

- **Audition procedures**

Approximately ninety aspirants apply to enter the conducting program annually, all of whom are invited to Vienna to participate in the three day audition process. In contrast to other schools investigated, no pre-selection is made based on resumes or videos.

Initially, prospective students sit for a comprehensive written exam covering areas such as aural skills, music theory, analysis of musical forms and general repertoire knowledge. As was the case at St. Petersburg, aural tests are often a weak point for students, as Stringer observes:

Usually it’s the ear training that is the big grim reaper that wipes everyone out, especially the test with the intervals and the twelve tone rows.... Some of them have no idea what a Major third is let alone a Major seventh.⁹³

On the second day, all candidates return for a vocal exam, which involves singing a prepared vocal work and a range of sight-singing exercises. At the end of these two days, twenty-five to thirty students are selected to proceed to the final stage. For this final day of examination, a jury of ten people is present, which includes the orchestral conducting, choral

⁹³ Stringer.

conducting and piano teachers, all of whom will have direct contact with the students during their studies. The candidates select one piece from a short list of works to conduct with a string quartet or other small ensemble. This is then followed by an interview with the jury on general musical culture, repertoire knowledge and any other areas the jury may wish to discuss. A Beethoven Piano Sonata of moderate difficulty must then be performed (or part thereof), plus a second piano work at the discretion of the student. An opportunity is also given for the student to perform on their primary instrument, should it not be the piano, and finally, sight reading is given in the form of an excerpt from an opera vocal score, to be played at the piano. Ordinarily, around fifteen students are admitted to the first year of the program, and it is decided at this point who their primary teacher will be. It is worth noting that all decisions are taken by the committee as a whole, and the conducting professors do not necessarily have the final say in the process. Students are given the option of expressing a preference for the teacher they wish to study from in their initial application, and this is normally adhered to.⁹⁴ For students whose mother-tongue is not German, a 'Zertifikat Deutsch' diploma must be submitted as evidence of their familiarity with the German language, or they may choose to sit a German language exam as part of the admission procedure.⁹⁵

- **The curriculum**

The first, two year diploma stage sees all conducting students (orchestral and choral) study together in the same program and receive a broad general education. Core subjects for students include basic conducting techniques, orchestral and choral conducting, piano studies, analysis, and historical compositional practices. Further compulsory subjects include score reading, vocal coaching, voice training, history, historical performance practice, opera conducting and Italian language studies. Some subjects (such as history and

⁹⁴ Stringer.

⁹⁵ Information Sheet, Diploma studies in conducting, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, 4.

analysis) are aimed at general music students, however, many are aimed squarely at conductors. With such a large student body the costs of offering such specialised courses can be justified, and this is a strength of the Vienna program.

Additionally, conducting students must sing in a choir, study a wind or string instrument, and learn the rudiments of percussion playing. The curriculum for the first diploma stage of studies is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. First diploma curriculum, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.

Year	1		2	
	1	2	3	4
Semester				
MAIN ARTISTIC SUBJECTS	ECTS	ECTS	ECTS	ECTS
Introduction to Conducting Techniques 1,2	5	5		
Orchestral Conducting 1,2			3	3
Choral Conducting 1,2			2.5	2.5
Piano 1-4	3	3	3	3
Historical Compositional Practices 1-4	3	3	2.5	2.5
Analysis 1-4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
COMPULSORY SUBJECTS				
Score Playing 1-4	2.5	2.5	2	2
Vocal Coaching 1-4	2	2	2	2
Aural Training 1-4	2	2	2	2
Voice Training 1-4	1	1	1	1
String or Wind Instrument 1-4	1	1	1	1
Percussion for Conductors 1,2	1	1		
Choir 1-4	1	1	1	1
Opera and Oratorio 1,2	1	1		
Opera Conducting 1,2			2	2
Music History 1	1			
Music History 2		1		
Music History 3,4			1	1
Introduction to Historical Performance Practice			1	
Italian 1-4	1	1	1	1
ELECTIVES	3	3	3	3
TOTAL	30	30	30.5	29.5

Source: Information Sheet – Diploma Studies of Conducting, Department of Conducting, Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts, 2012.

Table 3 clearly illustrates the remarkable depth and breadth of studies that conductors studying in Vienna undertake. The number and variety of supporting subjects studied is unrivalled amongst the schools investigated in this study, with the possible exception of the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Another feature of the Vienna system is the mixing of students studying orchestral and choral conducting for their first stage of study. As a result of this approach, many of the students are excellent singers, which can lead to extracurricular benefits for the students, as Stringer explains:

Our choral conducting teacher is Edwin Ortner who is the Arnold Schoenberg Chor's director... They are fodder material for the Arnold Schoenberg Chor, so they are constantly doing concerts with, for instance, Harnoncourt, or opera productions in the Theater an der Wien. I find that wonderful, these kids are singing in opera productions in costume, but a major one with people like Domingo or van Otter.⁹⁶

This practice of conducting students singing in the important choirs of Vienna is not a new one, with Zubin Mehta and others often recalling occasions when they sang under the great conductors of the day.⁹⁷

At the end of the first two years of study students must pass the 'first diploma exam' in order to continue on to the second stage of the course. Students sit exams for the subjects of historical compositional practices, analysis, piano, vocal coaching, choral conducting and orchestral conducting.

The second diploma stage sees students focus on their chosen specialisation: orchestral conducting, choral conducting or vocal coaching. However, those who choose to specialise in orchestral conducting still study a relatively large number of other subjects alongside their major for their third and fourth years. Subjects studied include choral conducting, score reading, vocal coaching, aural training, orchestration, opera conducting, a string or wind instrument, historical performance practice and contemporary music. In the fifth and final

⁹⁶ Stringer.

⁹⁷ Zubin Mehta and Renate Matuschka, *Zubin Mehta: the score of my life* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2009), 17.

year, students focus primarily on conducting itself, though piano lessons are continued right through until the end of the program, as a piano recital is required at the end of their studies.

Table 4 presents the curriculum for this second stage of studies.

Table 4. Second diploma curriculum, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.

Year	3		4		5	
Semester	5	6	7	8	9	10
MAIN ARTISTIC SUBJECTS	ECTS	ECTS	ECTS	ECTS	ECTS	ECTS
Orchestral Conducting 3-8	4	4	7	7	11	11
Piano 5-10	3	3	5	5	7.5	7.5
COMPULSORY SUBJECTS						
Choral Conducting 3-6	3	3	3	3		
Score Playing 5-8	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5		
Vocal Coaching	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5		
Analysis 5,6	2	2				
Aural Training	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		
Practical Instrumentation	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5		
String or Wind Instrument 5,6	1	1				
Thoroughbass 1,2	1	1	1	1		
Opera and Oratorio 3	1					
Opera Conducting 3,4	2	2				
Historical Performance Practices 1,2		2		2		
Contemporary Music from 1950			2	2		
Ensemble Contemporary Music					2	2
Diploma thesis					8	8
ELECTIVES	3	3	3	3	3	
TOTAL	30	30	31	29	31.5	28.5

Source: Information Sheet – Diploma Studies of Conducting, Department of Conducting, The Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts, 2012.

It is notable that students who have chosen to specialise in orchestral conducting continue to study choral conducting, as well as vocal coaching and piano studies. As a result of this, students are well placed to enter the profession through the opera house, perhaps beginning as a repetiteur or chorus master if this is the best option available to them. This is a common practice in the German speaking countries.

Of particular interest amongst these various subjects is the aural training that students receive for four of their five years of study. Designed specifically for conductors and composers by the school's aural training specialist Violaine de Larminat, the first two years of the course involve piano-based aural training similar to that found in many schools. During the second phase of studies, however, de Larminat increasingly uses examples from the chamber music and orchestral literature as a basis for tuition, developing the students' abilities to hear and analyse these more complex textures. Second diploma students also have the option of taking a newly-designed two semester course focused specifically on intonation and tuning. The first semester introduces students to the various systems of tuning and the challenges they present from an acoustic point of view. The second semester looks at specific problems for different groups (such as choirs, strings and winds) and engages with issues relating to human perception of tuning. The school has made recordings of various groups of instruments playing together to be used as examples and exercises for the students, and the school has plans to dedicate a number of orchestra rehearsals specifically to this challenge of tuning and intonation.⁹⁸ These courses can be considered cutting edge in terms of aural training for conductors, and put the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts at the forefront of conductor education in this area. Many aspects of the course are new and de Larminat herself acknowledges that there are several parts of the program which are experimental.⁹⁹ The world of conducting pedagogy should follow her work with great interest, as it seems there is room for significant further research in this area. With analytical listening being such an important part of what a conductor does, this should be regarded as an important area for development.

⁹⁸ Violaine de Larminat, email to author, 18 February 2013.

⁹⁹ de Larminat.

- **The conducting class**

At any given time, sixty students or more may be enrolled to study conducting at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts, making it the largest concentration of conducting students in the world. In the academic year of 2012-13 Professor Stringer had twenty-one students under his tutelage, whilst Professor Lajovic had thirty-nine students (this figure includes students officially enrolled with his assistant Simeon Pironkoff).¹⁰⁰ According to Stringer the custom of having large class sizes largely stems from the practices established by Hans Swarowsky during his tenure following the Second World War.¹⁰¹ In 2012-13 thirteen women were enrolled in the course, giving a male to female ratio of approximately five to one.¹⁰²

As a result of having two orchestral conducting professors of equal status at any given time, there are two distinct classes within the Institute. In Mark Stringer's opinion, there is something typically Viennese in this approach:

It's Vienna, there has to be a sense of competition... they've always had to have two. They had Mahler and Schalk, Strauss and Krauss, Karajan and Furtwängler, Welser-Möst and Luisi - there always has to be a sense of intrigue.¹⁰³

Each professor is free to design his own course structure and approach to the practical training of his students. As is clear from the audition procedure, students are expected to have at least a reasonable level of competence on the piano. Though students who are not strong on piano skills can be accepted into the program, those students will be expected to work hard on developing their keyboard skills, as Stringer observes:

We have several students who are not pianists, and don't particularly play well. But for these five years, they are put to the mill and they have to come out with a test for the jury at the end of their studies.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Bernhard Radschiner, email to author, 15 July 2013.

¹⁰¹ Stringer.

¹⁰² Radschiner.

¹⁰³ Stringer.

¹⁰⁴ Stringer.

This emphasis on keyboard skills can be said to be typical of most university conducting programs in the German speaking world.¹⁰⁵ One of the benefits of this is that students are in a position to play for each other and this is the approach that Stringer takes with his conducting class. He divides his class into units containing five students, each unit having a three hour conducting class, twice a week. These groups are generally organised by year group within the program. At any given time in a class, four students will be sitting at two pianos, playing from orchestral scores, and one will be standing on the podium conducting. These sessions naturally include discussions about conducting technique and interpretation, but may also extend to discussions of general musical issues and issues related to score preparation. Sessions with small ensemble or orchestra are scheduled in addition to these piano based classes at the discretion of the professor. A typical semester might see a total of twenty ensemble/orchestral scheduled over a fifteen week period. First and second year students tend to work with an ensemble, with sessions focused on one particular year group. Orchestral sessions for those pursuing their second diploma tend to pool all those students together and are concentrate on more substantial repertoire. Once a semester a guest teacher is also invited by Stringer to work with his advanced students for an intensive period of several days.¹⁰⁶

Professor Uroš Lajovic takes a very different approach to the structure of his class. Rather than dividing his class up into smaller units, he prefers to have all students together at one time for periods of intensive work. He begins these periods with one or two sessions discussing the works to be played with his students, analysing the works, and discussing their historical and sociological backgrounds. This preliminary analytical stage is of fundamental importance to Lajovic, just as it was to his teacher, Hans Swarowsky. According to Lajovic:

The composer had to come a long way from the idea to the realisation [of the piece], the realisation being the score. We have the score and must go the

¹⁰⁵ Zürich is a notable exception in this regard.

¹⁰⁶ Stringer.

complete way back to the idea. This we can do only with knowledge of composition, of harmony, counterpoint and knowledge of history.¹⁰⁷

Lajovic's approach to the score can be characterised as a form of reverse engineering that the student must undertake to fully comprehend the composer's intentions. It seems the strength and depth of the Vienna school's supporting subjects involving theory and analysis can be traced back to Swarowsky's particular emphasis on these aspects of a conductor's education.

These sessions for theoretical discussion are then followed by two three hour sessions with two pianos, where at any given time four students are reading the work from full score and one is conducting. Again, all students are present, and the pianists and conductors are rotated. Though students are conducting in these sessions, much time is again given over to general discussion. Lajovic comments:

We are comparing various editions, we are discussing about manuscripts, we are discussing stylistic questions, tempo, the possibilities of playing at that time compared to nowadays, there are so many questions to answer.¹⁰⁸

Keyboard sessions are then followed by two sessions with orchestra, with all instruments being covered where possible. The focus of these rehearsals is now very much on the conducting itself. Lajovic's assistant, Simeon Pironkoff, also works with the students in between these intensive periods, in particular with students in the earlier part of their studies. The difference in approaches between the two teachers can perhaps be explained by the fact that Uros Lajovic was a pupil of Swarowsky, and his practice of teaching large groups of students can be seen as an extension of Swarowsky's approach. According to Stringer, there is a positive sense of competition between the two classes: 'It's a healthy competition: there's also a sense of collegiality'.¹⁰⁹

The ensemble that students work with periodically over the course of their studies is known within the school as the Pro Arte Ensemble. It consists mostly of current students

¹⁰⁷ Uroš Lajovic, telephone interview by author, 6 December 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Lajovic.

¹⁰⁹ Stringer.

who are paid for their services, and is often supplemented by graduates of the school and some professionals, often from Bratislava. The ensemble is very flexible in size and can be anything from a small chamber ensemble to an orchestra big enough to play a Mahler symphony. In the 2012-13 academic year the overall budget for the ensemble is around 80,000 euros (approximately US\$109,000 as of December 2013), with the two professors dividing this amount equally between them. This money can be spent as they see fit, so they can choose to have a small number of sessions with a large orchestra, many sessions with an ensemble, or take a balanced approach over the course of the year. Mark Stringer takes the last approach with a combination of large orchestra sessions, and small ensemble work.¹¹⁰

One of the obvious advantages of Stringer's structure of teaching is that a considered approach to repertoire progression for students can be taken over the course of their studies. Whereas Lajovic pools all of his students together for conducting tuition, Stringer's classes are divided into year groups, especially in the first two years of study, providing more flexibility. In these early years, emphasis is given to works from the Baroque and Classical period, with a particular engagement with works involving text (though other works are of course included). Repertoire for Stringer's students in their second period of study varies more widely, and is not dissimilar to the repertoire selection found at other schools, aiming to cover the key works of the repertoire.

The repertoire covered by Lajovic, much like other schools investigated in this study, is inevitably less structured in terms of when students encounter particular repertoire, given that different year groups are studying together. However, he takes great pride in the amount of repertoire his students learn during their period of study, and aims to cover approximately thirty major works with his students per year, all of which are encountered with orchestra. He estimates that students will cover at least 120 work major works over the

¹¹⁰ Stringer.

course of their studies, which means that they will be well versed in all standard repertoire pieces.¹¹¹

- **Graduation**

At the end of their five years of study, students must sit for a final examination in order to be awarded their degree. This examination is divided into two parts, one open to the public and one held behind closed doors. The latter includes a performance of two varied works on the piano, a wide-ranging interview with the jury on various musical subjects, and a rehearsal session with orchestra. For this rehearsal the candidate must choose twenty pieces from a list of repertoire containing thirty works. From this list, the jury selects two works to be rehearsed. The candidate makes his or her selection at the end of the fourth year of study, and the final selection of the two works is made one week in advance of the actual exam. Thus a substantial amount of time is available for preparation. Should the student successfully pass this closed exam, they may proceed to the final open examination with orchestra. From the twenty works the candidate has chosen, the school chooses one work which is then presented in a public performance. The students are informed of the work to be performed at the end of their second to last semester of study. Additionally, students must submit either an Artistic Diploma Thesis, or present a concert that is supported by an essay on the works performed.¹¹²

- **The legacy of Hans Swarowsky**

Despite the passage of nearly forty years since the end of his tenure, the name of Hans Swarowsky still resonates strongly within the walls of the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts. Swarowsky was a well-known and respected conductor during his lifetime, but is today primarily remembered for his teaching in Vienna over a twenty-nine year period.

¹¹¹ Lajovic.

¹¹² Stringer.

Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado and Mariss Jansons, three of the biggest names in conducting today, were all students of 'Heilige Hans', as he is sometimes affectionately referred to in Vienna. The '50s and '60s were a golden era for Vienna's conducting class, just as they were for Vienna's musical life in general, with conductors such as Fürtwangler, Karajan, Böhm and Solti all spending significant periods of time in the city. As has already been observed, Swarowsky had a policy of having a very large conducting class, and as such taught an enormous number of students during his reign. Given this large body of former pupils, some have questioned whether Swarowsky was indeed a great teacher, or whether it was simply inevitable that there would be some success stories amongst all of these students. Imre Pallo, a former Swarowsky student, comments:

You see the names who came from Vienna who have in their CVs that they studied with Swarowsky. Because that's what you read, you don't read the other 36 who say I studied conducting with Swarowsky and became a computer programmer.¹¹³

As Pallo points out, whilst there are many pupils of Swarowsky who made successful careers, a large number of his students went in other directions after their studies. Naturally, we hear only of those who were successful. Vienna itself has long been a mecca for all kinds of students of music due to the city's rich cultural history and high level of music making, and it is logical to assume that many conducting students made their way there for this reason, as much as for the teachings of any particular pedagogue. Pallo certainly holds this view:

It was a great place to be... Karajan being the director of the opera, all of the great conductors coming through Vienna, Wiener Festwochen with Böhm and whoever else. That was a great place, that's where we learnt, what to do or what not to do... Vienna in the late fifties into the sixties and seventies was really the place to be, to see all the great conductors.¹¹⁴

This factor is probably still a significant attraction for students today, in addition to the reputation of the school and its professors. Stringer himself openly admits that this is the case:

¹¹³ Imre Pallo, interview by author, Sydney, 7 July 2011.

¹¹⁴ Pallo.

A student from Weimar [on exchange] asked, 'Would you still have room for me next semester?' Because he wants to spend a whole year here - it's not about me, it's about the city. You just become addicted to this city, for all of its bizarre quirks. I've really learnt more about Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven as people through being here. Because if there's one city that never changes, it's this city.¹¹⁵

As Stringer observes, to be able to walk the same streets and, more importantly, engage in the same culture as some of our greatest composers, can only be beneficial to a music student, and Vienna is one of the few cities in the world that can offer this.

Perhaps it is this combination of a good school and these uniquely rich cultural surroundings that has made Vienna a centre for conducting studies. Zubin Mehta, in his autobiography *The Score of My Life*, says:

I received my entire orchestral education exclusively and definitively in Vienna, and everything musical that I carry within me is a legacy from that world. I learned a tremendous amount there, not only because of the excellent training I received, but also because I constantly listened to everything there was to hear.¹¹⁶

Here, Mehta points to both his formal training and his musical surroundings as the reasons why Vienna made such a long-lasting impression on him. Professor Lajovic represents a strong link to the Swarowsky era for today's school and considers his teaching to be based on the same principles and philosophies as his former teacher.¹¹⁷ According to Lajovic, Swarowsky's legacy is sometimes underappreciated today:

The people who did not know Swarowsky, they simply cannot know what Swarowsky was. Because he was an absolute star, and represented Viennese cultural life before the first world war. And Vienna was the centre of culture in Europe before the first world war.¹¹⁸

This period of Viennese cultural life at the beginning of the twentieth century that Lajovic refers to saw some of classical music's giants co-exist in the same city. Mahler, Strauss, Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, to name a few, all worked in Vienna at this time, and

¹¹⁵ Stringer.

¹¹⁶ Mehta and Matuschka, 21.

¹¹⁷ Lajovic.

¹¹⁸ Lajovic.

influenced each other, much as they would influence the path of music in the 20th century. Swarowsky began his university studies studying the workings of the human mind with Sigmund Freud, rather than music.¹¹⁹ He later studied art history before undertaking conducting studies with Felix Weingartner, and at the same time studied composition with Arnold Schoenberg, and later with Anton Webern. He sang in the premiere of Mahler's 8th Symphony in Munich, conducted by the composer, and knew many leading composers of the time including Richard Strauss, Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith, and Igor Stravinsky. Lajovic says, 'It was his world. And all he knew he gave us.'¹²⁰

Despite his strong roots to Vienna's past, Swarowsky was forward thinking in many ways, as Zubin Mehta underlines:

... he was a man of our times. His friendship with the members of the Second Viennese School alone made him quite modern. He kept the flag of this altogether new music flying very high indeed – and this was in the mid-1950s! But as far as the classics were concerned, his unvarying credo was that Mozart's andante could never be an adagio. He was all for quick tempi and in this respect was completely different from many other conductors of his time.¹²²

It seems in fact that he was a man ahead of his time in several respects. Vienna in the 1950s was far from being a hotbed of modernism, and even the composers of the Second Viennese School were neglected. His commitment to these works and others by living composers made him a unique figure in Viennese cultural life at the time. Equally, his preference for 'quick tempi' and a flowing Mozart andante, seem to point forward to the early music movement which did not begin in earnest for another twenty years. This is particularly so when one remembers his research into original manuscripts. Though not a pupil of Swarowsky himself, Stringer has come to have a deep respect for what he stood for:

He was clearly an incredibly intelligent musician who was very far ahead of his time in the forties and fifties musicologically. And his utter obsession with manuscripts and what Schubert's manuscripts look like and musicological

¹¹⁹ Hans Swarowsky, *Wahrung der Gestalt* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1979). Dust jacket.

¹²⁰ Lajovic.

¹²² Lajovic.

research and his knowledge of the renaissance music. Really far ahead of his time.¹²³

This respect for the score which was his trademark was also the starting point for the studies of his pupils. According to Nicholas Braithwaite, who studied with Swarowsky in the early 1960s, much of his teaching was done in the form of seminars for the students (who numbered forty-five or more). Braithwaite recalls:

He'd take a piece of music and talk about how you approach it as a conductor. First his mantra was the analysis, and he'd go on from there to other things...He taught me to analyse music in terms of 8 bar structures, and if it isn't [8 bars], there's a diminution or extension... that's a great aide memoire as well.¹²⁴

During Braithwaite's period of study (1961-63), these seminars were the only contact beginning students had with Swarowsky, and the actual physical act of conducting was not investigated thoroughly until the later years of study. Parallels can also be drawn between Swarowsky and Lajovic in this regard, as students of Lajovic will likely spend more time working on practical aspects with the assistant teacher at the beginning of their studies, working more intensively with the Professor as their studies progress.

This emphasis on score analysis as a starting point is also something that Lajovic continues in his teaching today:

It means very deep analysis of works. His method of teaching was absolute knowing of the piece with all its elements – elements of construction, periodics, elements of harmony, elements of counterpoint, elements of knowing of composition itself.¹²⁵

Swarowsky's analytical approach to the score is summarised in the book, *Wahrung der Gestalt*, a collection of his writing on the subject of conducting compiled after his death by Manfred Huss.¹²⁶ The book also covers issue of style, interpretation, and gives detailed analyses of key works from the standard repertoire. Tellingly, very few pages are devoted to

¹²³ Stringer.

¹²⁴ Nicholas Braithwaite, interview by author, Adelaide, 15 April 2011.

¹²⁵ Lajovic.

¹²⁶ Hans Swarowsky, *Wahrung der Gestalt* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1979).

the physical aspect of conducting, the emphasis being very much on analysis and the score itself.

However, Swarowsky did have a number of clear principles regarding physical technique. A cornerstone of his teaching was the importance of the upbeat. Lajovic comments:

With the upbeat you have to give the tempo, dynamic and character of the note which is following. Upbeat is not only upbeat. It's the whole information about everything that you have to demand from the orchestra. So our conducting is not beating, our conducting is really illustration of what has to happen.¹²⁷

It is not particularly unusual for a teacher to demand that a great deal of information is communicated in the upbeat, but as Lajovic points out, Swarowsky insisted on 'the whole information about everything', being communicated in this preparatory gesture. This can be said to be an unusual emphasis. Stringer points to another distinctive aspect of the Swarowsky upbeat that he has observed during his time in Vienna:

My colleague [Lajovic] says an upbeat has to have a click, you cannot get an orchestra together without the click... what I call a click but what it is, is a defined beginning of the upbeat, through the wrist. I will be the first one in line to say - that really works. The orchestra plays so well together.¹²⁸

This 'click' that Stringer refers to can be seen in the conducting of many former Swarowsky students, a particularly good example being Mehta. Stringer wonders if this click may be related to the Viennese approach to sound production, which often results in a delayed sound:

I'm convinced that the reason they are so insistent on the click with the upbeat is – here in Vienna if you don't do that... they will play centuries behind your beat and the click is like a lasso, it just pulls the orchestra closer to your beat.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Lajovic.

¹²⁸ Stringer.

¹²⁹ Stringer.

A click introduces more rhythmic definition and precision into a gesture, and an orchestra, generally speaking, will respond sooner to a precise, well-defined gesture than to a rounder gesture, which may open the door for an orchestra that is inclined to play late, to play very late indeed. The exact mechanics and reasons for this phenomenon are worthy of a separate thesis in themselves.

Much like Musin, Swarowsky considered that every conducted beat had a preparatory upbeat, and that this principle of giving all information to the orchestra in the upbeat applied at all times. Hence the conductor has to think well in advance what he or she wants on the next beat. Lajovic refers to this as 'phase shifting':

We must think the score in so called 'phase shifting' – one beat ahead. Because he [Swarowsky] said you have to show everybody in the orchestra what you want from them in time, it has to be one metrical unit before it should happen... we meet the orchestra at the last beat of the score. From the beginning, through all the score, we are conducting one metrical unit before the orchestra.¹³⁰

If all information is to be given in the upbeat, then this information is given one metrical unit before, as Lajovic suggests. The conductor is then in effect giving all instructions one beat in advance, and the score has become, in the conductor's mind at least, 'phase shifted.' This is not a simple procedure, as the conductor must be in two places at once:

We are conducting from two scores, we are giving instructions from the phase shifted score, and we are repairing from the real score. What already happened. Professor Swarowsky said, conducting is a mental thing. It has to happen at first in our mind, in our heads.¹³¹

The two scores that Lajovic refers to here are therefore the conductor's image of the work, and then the orchestra's realisation of that image. The conductor must of course engage with what the orchestra produces, in order make corrections and 'repair' what has happened. Lajovic continues:

¹³⁰ Lajovic.

¹³¹ Lajovic.

When you conduct, you should be, as leader, one step before the others. When you are not one step before the others, you are not a conductor, but a companion... conducting is much more than only beating the time.¹³²

This seems to be the essence of the Swarowsky approach to technique – that all musical impulses and wishes are communicated to the orchestra well in advance, thus giving the orchestra time to digest the information, and react in good time. The musical impulses themselves, of course, being based on a thorough analysis of the score, and a meaningful understanding of the composer's wishes.

It is difficult to give an accurate assessment of Swarowsky's tenure nearly forty years after his passing. Whether the numerous famous graduates produced were as a result of excellent tuition, or were simply a by-product of the sheer numbers of students and the attraction of Vienna itself, is impossible to say. However, he was a key figure in the city's musical culture, combining strong ties to Vienna's cultural heritage, whilst at the same time looking forward to musical trends that lay well into the future. With Lajovic having retired in 2012, and his successor yet to be appointed, it remains to be seen whether the Swarowsky legacy will continue in Vienna.

- **Summary**

The primary distinctive feature of the conducting program of the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts is the unusually large size of its student body, a feature that can be traced back to the practices of Swarowsky, the father figure of the program. If one takes the position that the key role of an institution training conductors is to develop skills and knowledge in the areas of music theory, history, score analysis, aural skills, keyboard playing, and other supporting subjects, then the Vienna approach makes sense. With such large student numbers, it is feasible for the school to design these subjects specifically for conductors, and to offer a remarkably rich and broad general musical education. For

¹³² Lajovic.

students in their early years of studies, these subjects make up the bulk of the education itself, with the physical act of conducting being merely a focal point.

However, there are downsides to this approach. Students inevitably receive less individual attention, and in particular, less time conducting an orchestra. Though the program invests significant resources to provide a practice orchestra for students, this investment is diluted by the sheer size of the student body. Students will therefore graduate with less practical conducting experience than those of other schools examined in this study.

Also of note is the two teacher system employed, leading to two distinct and separate classes within the one school. To a certain extent this may be a necessity given the number of students, but it also creates an interesting dynamic within the school, adding a healthy element of competition.

The Vienna school must be viewed in the context of musical life in the German-speaking countries, and in particular, in the context of the German opera house system. For most of the twentieth century this was the obvious career path for European conductors, and the Vienna approach is clearly aimed at preparing students for this world. In comparison to other schools in this study, the school can be said to take a very traditional approach, which might be viewed as old fashioned by some. If the school is able to maintain its impressive regimen of supporting subjects whilst reducing student numbers to some degree, the program may be able to offer an ideal learning environment for the aspiring conductor.

2.4 The University of Arts, Zürich

The Zürich University of the Arts (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste) was formed on August 2007 as a result of the merger of the Zürich School of Music, Drama and Dance, and the School of Art and Design Zürich. This merger created an institution that is one of the largest art universities in Europe, with over 2,500 students studying music, design, film, art, media, dance, theatre and art education. Prior to the merger, the Zürich School of Music, Drama and Dance itself was a relatively young institution having been formed in 1999 as the result of the integration of various organisations including the Zürich School of Music. Despite the various name changes it has undergone in recent years, the music school has a long history that can be traced back to the 1870s.¹³³

Immediately after the 1999 merger, a new conducting program was established, with Johannes Schlaefli appointed as its director. Prior to this, the music schools in Zürich, Bern, Basel and Geneva had run a joint conducting program known as 'Kapellmeisterklasse' under the general direction of conductor Manfred Honeck. However, this system was abandoned when the Swiss music school system was re-organised, as it was felt that a single school approach was more practical.¹³⁴ Under Schlaefli's guidance, the reputation of the conducting program has developed rapidly and it can now be said to be one of the most desired schools at which to study in Europe. Compared to the other schools examined, it can be considered to be in its relative infancy at fourteen years of age. Despite this, a number of graduates already hold important positions. Young conductors such as Patrick Lange (until recently Music Director of the Komische Oper Berlin), Philippe Bach (Music Director in Meiningen), Nathan Brock (resident conductor of the Montreal Symphony), Leo McFall and Mirga Grazinyte, can all be said to be leaders in their field. Schlaefli is also active as a teacher of masterclasses outside of the school which are well attended. However, his focus remains very much on his conducting class at the Zürich University of Arts.

¹³³ 'About the Zürich University of Arts,' <http://www.zhdk.ch/index.php?id=717> (accessed 1 August 2012).

¹³⁴ Johannes Schlaefli, interview by author, Helsinki, 1 October 2011.

- **Degree options and the curriculum**

The conducting program of the Zürich University of Arts is unique in that it offers studies at three different levels: a Bachelor of Arts in Music degree, a Master of Arts in Music Performance degree and what is known as a Master of Arts in Specialised Music Performance degree. This provides students with a generous range of options in terms of level and duration of studies. In theory, a student could spend a total of seven years studying conducting if they enrolled in the Bachelor program and worked their way through the available courses. Alternatively, a more experienced musician has the option to study for just two years and graduate with a Masters degree, but also has the possibility of continuing to the Master of Arts in Specialised Music, giving them a total of four years of study. Thus, a wider variety of students can be catered for.

As discussed in Part One of this thesis, there is some debate as to whether it is best to study conducting at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, with some teachers feeling that the student is better off doing an undergraduate degree on their primary instrument, prior to beginning serious conducting studies. Schlaefli himself was initially sceptical of offering the Bachelor degree:

It came with the Bologna system – we had to do it. But we are very careful about students studying a Bachelor in conducting, because I think that the best way is that someone becomes a musician first, and it's very good to play an orchestral instrument – it's not necessary, but it's very good, to know the orchestra from the inside and then to do that step [of studying conducting].¹³⁵

The Bachelor degree in Zürich is unusual in that the student effectively does a double major degree, majoring in both conducting and their primary instrument. This gives the student the chance to continue their musical development on their instrument, whilst beginning to develop their conducting skills and knowledge of the orchestral repertoire at an early stage. Over a period of three years, students are required to collect a total of 180 ECTS points, with instrumental lessons, conducting, and piano/score reading being at the core of the program.

¹³⁵ Schlaefli.

The rest of the curriculum at the Bachelor level is identical to that undertaken by all other music students. Supporting subjects such as history, harmony and ear training are also required, and first year students also sing in a choir. The undergraduate program in Zürich is notable for including some subjects not often seen on classical music courses, such as group improvisation, elocution, and a subject aimed at giving a basic understanding of physiology and good habits for the body. Though they only make up a small part of a student's studies (7 points out of 180), their inclusion points to an open-minded and forward looking program, rather than one resting solely on traditional educational principles. A common feature of all the degrees offered in Zürich is a grouping of subjects collectively referred to as the 'Individual Profile' for each student.¹³⁶ The areas of study for these subjects are agreed upon between the student and the school, and allow the student to have a focus on a particular area of interest through their degree. Table 5 presents an outline of the Bachelor of Arts in Music curriculum.

Though the Bachelor degree is not unpopular, most students enter at the Masters level, and this is the focus of conducting studies at the Zürich University of Arts.¹³⁷ At this level the art of conducting itself is the focus and only supporting subjects that relate to conducting directly are included. Over a two year period students must collect a total of 120 points, with 68 of these points coming from core conducting subjects. Students are also required to study piano/score reading, aural skills, analysis, and attend a number of orchestra rehearsals and concerts of professional orchestras. The supporting subjects offered are designed with conductors in mind. The aural studies are aimed specifically at conductors and the repertoire studied in the analysis program is aligned with the repertoire that the students are conducting at that time, though other students may also take the subject.

¹³⁶ 'Individuelles Profil' in the original German.

¹³⁷ Schlaefli.

Table 5. Bachelor of Arts in Music curriculum, Zürich University of Arts.

Year	1		2		3		Total
Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Core Studies							
Instrumental studies (or Voice)	5	5	5	5	5	5	30
Conducting	3	3	3	3	3	3	18
Conducting workshops	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Piano/Score reading	4	4	4	4	7	7	30
Hospitationen/External visits	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
General Music Studies							
Music history	2	2	2				6
Harmony, Analysis and Form	2.5	2.5					5
Harmony, Analysis – New Music			2.5	2.5			5
Ear training	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5			10
Theory					3	3	6
Practical Music Studies							
Body development/Physiology	1.5	1.5					3
Choir	1	1					2
Group improvisation	1	1					2
Elocution			1	1			2
Individual Profile							
Bachelor Project					3	3	6
Z-Module	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	9
Learning agreement (Lernvereinbarung)	2	2	4.5	6.5	3.5	3.5	22
Total	30	30	30	30	30	30	180

Source: Lehrplan, Bachelor of Arts in Musik, Zürich University of Arts, 2013. Translated by author.

It is worth noting that Schlaefli likes to take a flexible approach to these extra studies, as he does not wish to overburden the student with studies that may not be necessary. Therefore, in cases where a student already has advanced keyboard skills and is an adept score reader, or has advanced aural skills, they may be exempted from these classes. Schlaefli explains:

We decide when people do the audition. We decide they don't need this, they don't need that and we just give the credit points, because conducting itself is a thing that is so challenging – to learn so many pieces, so many pages of scores... and that takes so much time, so much energy. So why should somebody spend hours in an ear training class when they are already fantastic? The ears are trained when they are conducting. But if somebody needs help, then they should do it.¹³⁸

This in turn allows the teachers of these areas to focus their energies on the students who are in need of improvement.

Just as in the Bachelor degree, the student agrees on an 'Individual Profile' with the school, giving a personalised focus to the degree. Additionally, students gain credit for working as assistants on two to three projects at some point during their studies. Table 6 outlines the curriculum of the standard Masters degree.

¹³⁸ Schlaefli.

Table 6. Master of Arts in Music Performance curriculum, Zürich University of Arts.

Year	1		2		Total
Semester	1	2	3	4	
Core Subjects					
Conducting (Individual lessons)	5	5	5	5	20
Conducting (Class lessons)	5	5	5	5	20
Study weeks	4	4	4	4	16
Workshops	3	3	3	3	12
Supporting Subjects					
Piano/Score reading	3	3	3	3	12
Ear training	1	1			2
Analysis	2	2	2		6
Concert and Rehearsal visits					4
Individual Profile					
Elective					16
Assisting					4
Master project					8
Total					120

Source: Lehrplan, Bachelor of Arts in Musik, Zürich University of Arts, 2013. Translated by author.

At the level of the Specialised Masters degree, the focus of studies is tightened further still on the core conducting studies, with supporting subjects such as ear training, analysis and score reading, not appearing at all in the curriculum. As well as continuing general conducting studies, students are required to develop a personal focus on a chosen area of repertoire or type of ensemble. Students entering this degree may be continuing on from the regular Masters degree discussed above, or they may enter directly. Like the regular Masters, this is a two year program and students are required to collect 120 points. The

Specialised Masters is unique amongst the schools studied for this dissertation, and Schlaefli acknowledges that its primary purpose is to give students the option of having more time to develop. He believes two years is often not long enough:

The Masters degree is only two years - that is very short. We have people who did not do the Bachelor in conducting, but with an instrument, so the whole conducting thing is new to them. It is possible, because as we said the thing the hands do is not so difficult to learn, but to be a good conductor in the moment needs a lot of experience and then two years is very, very short. Too short I think.¹³⁹

The addition of this extra Masters degree therefore allows the student who has entered at the postgraduate level the possibility of four years of study. Table 7 presents the Specialised Masters curriculum.

Table 7. Master of Arts in Specialised Music Performance curriculum, Zürich University of Arts.

Year	1		2		Total
Semester	1	2	3	4	
Core Subjects					
Conducting (Individual lessons)	5	5	5	5	20
Conducting (Class lessons)	5	5	5	5	20
Study weeks	4	4	4	4	16
Workshops	3	3	3	3	12
Master Project				8	8
Supporting Subjects					
Electives	3	3	3		9
Assisting					5
Individual Profile					30
Total					120

Source: Lehrplan, Bachelor of Arts in Musik, Zürich University of Arts, 2013. Translated by author.

¹³⁹ Schlaefli.

- **The audition**

Every year the school receives around thirty applicants for the various levels of the conducting program, with between one and three new conducting students being admitted.¹⁴⁰

For the Bachelor program, the audition is essentially identical to the audition process for an instrumentalist or singer, but with the addition of a short conducting examination. This consists of conducting an ensemble in one work which is chosen by the conducting faculty a month before the audition. The candidate is then asked questions about musical aspects of this particular work, and a short interview is conducted regarding their musical ambitions and reasons for their interest in conducting. In the more general part of the audition process, aimed at all incoming Bachelor students, the applicants play their instrument or sing (just as if they were majoring in their instrument rather than conducting), sit for an aural exam, theory exam and perform some sight singing exercises. Somewhat unusually, the Zürich University of the Arts also includes improvisation as part of the audition process for Bachelor applicants of all programs. This involves improvising both in a group and individually across a range of musical styles. Conducting applicants partake in these sessions with their primary instrument, rather than their baton.

The audition requirements for the two types of Masters degree are identical. Applicants first send a DVD of themselves conducting an orchestra, ensemble or piano, along with their relevant musical qualifications. Approximately ten of the applicants are then invited to Zürich to participate in a live audition of approximately one hour. Much like the applicants at the Bachelor level, all conductors work with an ensemble on two contrasting pieces selected one month before the audition. One piece they are instructed to rehearse and the other, to play through without stopping. They must then give a short demonstration of their abilities on their primary instrument, play a prepared piece on the piano, and also play a sight reading test on

¹⁴⁰ Schlaefli.

the piano. Though playing the piano is required in the audition, Schlaefli places more emphasis on the candidate's performance on their primary instrument:

We want to get to know them as expressive musicians. There is piano playing... We want to know the level, but they don't have to play the piano well if they are good conductors – they come into the class anyway.¹⁴¹

Candidates are then given a series of solfège and aural tests, and finally, are interviewed both on their career objectives and level of general musical knowledge. It is worth noting that graduates from the Bachelor degree in conducting are not required to re-audition for the Masters level, and can be accepted straight into the program. However, for a student who has completed the regular Masters degree and wishes to continue with a Specialised Masters, a new audition is required.¹⁴²

Like most schools investigated in this study, the audition process in Zürich can be said to be detailed and thorough. However, Schlaefli still does not believe the process is really sufficient:

It can be really unfair, because some people need time and the audition is quite short ... in courses it can be that after the first day I think that somebody doesn't have this talent, and on the second day, I think – Wow, I never expected that. Then I think I should have auditions for a whole week, and decide after five times instead of after one time! But unfortunately that is not possible.¹⁴³

It seems doubtful that there is a practical solution to this problem that would lie within the confines of conventional procedures for a tertiary level school. Certainly, it is important to remember that despite the rigours of these procedures, there is inevitably an element of chance in which students are finally selected.

¹⁴¹ Schlaefli.

¹⁴² Schlaefli.

¹⁴³ Schlaefli.

- **The conducting class**

In the 2012-13 academic year, a total of nine students studied conducting in the Zürich program, including one Erasmus exchange student. According to Schlaefli, this can be considered a standard class size for the school. These nine students consisted of two students studying at the Bachelor level, three in the regular Masters program and four studying towards the Specialised Masters degree. In the 2011-12 academic year two members of the class were female, but in the 2012-13 academic year, the class was all male. The class can be considered to be very international with only three Swiss nationals enrolled and six students coming from other parts of Europe, Asia and South America. Unlike Finland, where the number of foreign students has sometimes been contentious, the Zürich University of Arts has no issue with the majority of conducting students being foreigners. Schlaefli comments:

Of course the school likes to have Swiss students and that can be a factor when students are of a similar level [at the audition]. But the school understands that this is an international school and the best applicants should study.¹⁴⁴

Foreign students must, however, pay slightly more for their tuition than their Swiss counterparts. As of 2013, tuition fees for Swiss students are 720 Swiss francs per semester, with foreigners paying 1,220 Swiss francs per semester (approximately US\$800 and US\$1,350 respectively as of December, 2013).¹⁴⁵ The Zürich program is, therefore, more expensive than some other European schools, though students with financial difficulties can apply to have their fees reduced.

Every Monday, all conducting students (regardless of the degree for which they are studying) come together for a morning and afternoon session at the university, each lasting three hours. No ensemble is present at the morning session and this time is reserved for open discussion. This discussion can revolve around repertoire that is currently being

¹⁴⁴ Johannes Schlaefli, telephone interview by author, 19 September 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Pia Perolini, email to author, 29 July 2013.

worked on, general conducting issues that have presented themselves in recent lessons, or occasionally a guest may be invited to talk about specific instrumental techniques or issues relating to a specialised area of performance practice such as early music.

In the afternoon session the class has a small ensemble to work with, consisting of a string quintet and wind quartet, with conducting students filling in missing parts at the piano. Schlaefli refers to this session as a 'Geschützte Werkstatt', which translates roughly into English as a 'sheltered workshop'. The implication being that there is plenty of time for discussion of various issues as they arise and a relaxed and open approach is taken. This is in contrast to a session with orchestra where time is considered precious and must not be wasted with too much talking. Much like the morning session, a wide variety of issues may be explored such as specific technical issues, interpretative issues, or issues relating to rehearsal technique and how to get the best out of a group of musicians. Students also have a weekly individual session with Schlaefli of around forty minutes and again, a flexible approach is taken to the use of this time. It is often used to watch videos from earlier sessions, but may also involve working on technical issues or discussing any problems the student may have.

Unlike most other schools examined in this study, there is no 'lab orchestra' or practice orchestra with which the students work on a weekly basis. Instead, students have the opportunity to work with a variety of different orchestras in what are referred to as Workshops and Study Weeks (Studienwochen). Workshops tend to be fairly short and focused, lasting perhaps one or two rehearsals, and involve the students conducting one of a wide range of orchestras in Switzerland who work regularly with the conducting class.

Schlaefli comments:

We have student orchestras we can go to, we have semi-professional freelance orchestras, we have good professional orchestras... and there it's much more a thing of – be well prepared, and do your thing very quickly and very well – we don't have much time. So I don't interrupt much. I let them more or less do their thing and then we analyse on video. There the video is very important.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Johannes Schlaefli, interview by author, Helsinki, 1 October 2011.

Among the orchestras who participate in these workshops are Akademisches Orchester Zürich, Alumni-Sinfonieorchester Zürich, Akademisches Kammerorchester Zürich, Helferei-Orchester Zürich, Sinfonisches Orchester Zürich, Capella dei giovani Aarau, Winterthürer Symphoniker, Orchester Santa Maria Luzern, Berner Kammerorchester, Collegium Musicum Basel, Orchester Musikkollegium Winterthür, Festival Strings Luzern, Bieler Sinfonieorchester and Opernstudio Biel.¹⁴⁷ Orchestras from the music school itself also participate on occasion, though Schlaefli points out that the school prefers the class not to rely too much on this resource.

As the name suggests, Study Weeks are longer in duration and normally involve four to six students travelling to an orchestra where they spend four or five days rehearsing and also give a shared performance at the week's end. These orchestras are hired by the school and are often in either the Czech Republic or Bulgaria. Orchestras that the conducting class has visited in recent years include the symphony orchestras of Karlsbad, Marienbad und Teplice, 'Kammerorchester Berg' in Prague, and the Academic Orchestra of Sofia in Bulgaria.¹⁴⁸ Students are normally given the opportunity to attend three of these Study Weeks per year. Thus, the students have access to a wide range of orchestras of varying levels, abilities and cultural backgrounds, for short, concentrated periods of time.

Whilst having a regular practice orchestra 'in house' would be a simpler solution logistically to working with all of these different orchestras, there are numerous advantages to this system for the students. Working with a regular practice orchestra of students or freelancers on a weekly basis (as is a common practice at many of the schools studied) can potentially lead to a problem of overfamiliarity. Over time, the conducting students and the players will inevitably form some kind of relationship, and in most circumstances, this is likely to be a positive relationship. This is of course desired, and the best thing for that particular situation. However, an atmosphere may develop that might best be described as

¹⁴⁷ 'Orchesterleitung – Workshops,' <http://www.zhdk.ch/index.php?id=12091> (accessed 2 August 2012).

¹⁴⁸ 'Orchesterleitung – Studienwochen,' <http://www.zhdk.ch/index.php?id=12092> (accessed 2 August 2012).

'comfortable', and there are positive and negative aspects to this. On the one hand, students and players may be able to discuss issues openly, particularly when problems arise. On the other hand, this atmosphere is a long way from what students will likely experience in the profession, and they may find making the transition to working with strangers with high expectations challenging in the early stages of their career. The Zürich approach has the advantage of exposing students on a regular basis to an environment which more closely resembles the reality of the profession.

A broad range of repertoire from the baroque era right through to contemporary music is covered in the course. Opera is also included in the studies from time to time, but it is fair to say that the focus is primarily on orchestral conducting, certainly in comparison to other German speaking conducting programs. Due to the irregular nature of contact with orchestras, repertoire to be studied is selected primarily with practical considerations in mind, rather than following any form of organic progression. Repertoire must be appropriate for the orchestras that are being visited, and in any case, the students may be in the first year of their studies or their seventh, thus giving an additional complication to organising a structured approach to the introduction of new repertoire. Schlaefli acknowledges that this is perhaps not ideal, but feels it is not a huge problem for the students, and is a necessary by-product of the Zürich approach to providing time with orchestras.

- **Graduation**

At the Bachelor level there is no final examination, but instead, students take an examination known as a 'Modulprüfung' at the end of the second year of their studies. This is a relatively straightforward exam and involves conducting a small ensemble in a rehearsal setting within the school.

The graduation procedure for Masters students is far more in depth. For both Masters degrees, the conducting component of the assessment is identical, with the primary focus falling on a 15-20 minute performance as part of a concert with a professional orchestra.

These exams are normally incorporated into summer concerts with the Bieler Sinfonieorchester, where several students can share the podium. The jury also attends a rehearsal for the performance, and after the rehearsal the graduating student has a discussion with the jury known as a 'Probenkolloquium', where general issues about music and the conducting profession can be discussed. Additionally, students must complete three shorter exams, ten to fifteen minutes in duration, which are normally done with a small group at the school. The first involves working with a singer and involves conducting operatic recitatives and accompanying, the second tests the students' skills in accompanying a soloist and the third involves conducting through a work with complicated beating patterns, normally a contemporary work. This combination of public and in-house examinations gives the jury a thorough view of the students' skills.

For the regular Masters level there are examinations in analysis, ear training and score reading; and for both Masters levels an academic paper of 10–20 pages is required. In the case of the Specialised Masters, this paper is focused on their chosen area of specialisation for the degree, and for the regular Masters student, the document examines the works they are performing in their concert. Should the student fail a part of the examination procedure for any reason, they may retake the exam, but the second result is considered final.¹⁴⁹

- **The pedagogical approach of Johannes Schlaefli**

Johannes Schlaefli has been teaching conducting for nearly two decades. Over this period of time, he has developed specific viewpoints on the role of the conducting professor, and how to extract the best results from students. For Schlaefli, it is important to remember the many challenges a conductor must face as a student:

As a young conductor you are confronted with so much information. What you see, what you hear, what you feel, and to learn to deal with that amount of information coming towards you, then you need to get the right

¹⁴⁹ Schlaefli.

information [from the teacher] at the right time. If you get just a lot of information then you are just overwhelmed, and people get stuck.¹⁵⁰

As discussed in Section 1.7, this feeling of being overwhelmed often leads to the conductor being unable to listen analytically, and thus, unable to rehearse effectively. Schlaefli therefore does not wish to add too many further complications for the student:

For me also it was important to learn to say maybe only five percent of what I could say. To filter and also to allow the right amount of time for growth and to realise when a student needs time before I mention a certain thing I see. I don't mention it at all and wait for the right moment to go into that certain subject.¹⁵¹

In this way, students can deal with one issue at a time and give that particular issue the attention and time it needs to improve. Schlaefli sees his role as being closer to that of a coach, rather than a teacher. In his view, it is his job to lead the students on a path of discovery, and to point out important concepts they need to understand at the right stage of their development:

I think my main role as a conducting teacher is to grab the right moment to give the student a focus. This can even be just about how in a certain part of the score the different groups in the orchestra work together. Just to focus on that and suddenly they understand how this works. This makes their hands completely different and they have learnt a thing that will help many times [in the future]. But I didn't teach them. I just grabbed the right moment to point out – be careful with this combination of groups in the orchestra. And I think that's actually what I understand as teaching. This can be any subject, this can be the hands, this can be the ears, this can be psychology... but to find the right moment to point out a certain thing that the student at that moment really can understand and can say, 'Aha, I understand this. I take this with me, and I will go a different way from now on'. But it's their decision, their understanding of the thing and their decision to take that step. So that's why I call teaching conducting mostly being a good coach.¹⁵²

For this approach to succeed, every student must be treated on individual terms and receive a great amount of personal attention from the teacher. This philosophy has much in common

¹⁵⁰ Schlaefli.

¹⁵¹ Schlaefli.

¹⁵² Schlaefli.

with that of Jorma Panula, who often stresses the importance of the individuality of each student, and plays a role closer to that of a mentor than a teacher per se.¹⁵³ A further commonality with the Finnish pedagogue is the importance Schlaefli places on a positive class atmosphere:

For me it's very important that my class feels like a family. They talk to each other, they support each other, and they learn from each other. And that's also how I teach when we have video reviews... very often I say, 'This passage didn't work, do you remember how the other student did that passage – it worked... try to get something out of that image and try to go in the same direction.' So I encourage them to really learn from each other. On the other hand I try to also point out that each one is different. Something can work for him, but for me it doesn't work. So that's why I like that they are together and to watch and observe each other and see what they can learn from each other and realise where they are unique and different.¹⁵⁴

Schlaefli encourages students to analyse and be aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses, with fellow students representing a model for learning in particular situations. This approach also ensures that students remain fully engaged with proceedings – and therefore learning – when they are not conducting themselves.

Whilst there are similarities with the Finnish school, it seems that Schlaefli is not quite as liberal in his approach as Panula, and has clearly defined principles which he wishes his students to embody. The most important of these principles is the wish to see a clear musical vision emerge when a student is on the podium:

I always try to encourage the students that the number one when being in front of the orchestra is not to do no mistakes and have the four in the right point – this is also important, sometimes it's number two – but the number one is always to be there as a musically vibrating personality, who is asking for sounds just by being there. We can just feel this person needs this kind of sound. And if someone is standing in front of the orchestra and kind of waiting for what is coming and there is no inner vision, no inner image of how the sound should be, then we immediately realise and it's weak. It can be very clean, it can be very OK, but it doesn't help.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ See page 115.

¹⁵⁴ Schlaefli.

¹⁵⁵ Schlaefli.

Though technique is taught and valued, it is ultimately only a means to an end. Perhaps this inner vision cannot be taught explicitly. Certainly, some teachers may view this as something that a student either has or not. Schlaefli, however, is keen to encourage and nurture this fundamental quality in his students throughout their studies, and continually reminds them that of the many things they must think of when on the podium, this is the most important thing.

- **Summary**

The Zürich University of the Arts is unique in the context of this study in that it is still in its relative infancy, the current program having only begun in 1999. Whilst the program does have some antecedents, there are no pedagogical giants in whose footsteps Johannes Schlaefli must tread. Perhaps this should be considered as a positive, as it has given him the opportunity to make a completely fresh start, and to develop a program after his own personal vision, unencumbered by expectations set by a previous teacher.

The program is particularly notable for its mobility, with the conducting class regularly travelling to work with orchestras external to the institution, rather than relying on orchestras provided by the school. More than any other course, it relies on its relationships with other organisations in the musical community, as well as its financial power to buy orchestral time abroad. The relatively small physical size of Switzerland means there are many orchestras within close proximity, and the fact that Schlaefli is Swiss, with strong local connections, is also a factor that should not be overlooked. It is inevitable that a teacher who is native to the country of a particular school will bring more of these contacts to their role than a teacher who is imported from elsewhere. These connections with local orchestras are something that many conducting programs around the world could aim to emulate. What many might find difficult to match are the trips which Schlaefli and his class are able to undertake to countries such as the Czech Republic. To hire an orchestra for a week and pay for the travels and accommodation of the students, albeit a small group, is expensive. Here the financial

strengths of the school come to the fore, and these 'Study Weeks' abroad are an integral part of the Zürich program. With its mix of regular classes on Mondays, and these intensive periods of work, the conducting program of the Zürich University of Arts seems to have found a good balance between regular, ongoing tuition, and intensive periods which are closer to the reality of working as a professional conductor.

2.5 The Juilliard School, New York

The Juilliard School can trace its history back to 1905 when the Institute of Musical Art was founded in New York City by Dr Frank Damrosch, a godson of Franz Liszt. In 1926, it merged with the Juilliard Graduate School (itself founded in 1924) and became the Juilliard School of Music. Dance and Drama divisions were added in 1951 and 1968 respectively, and since then it has been known simply as 'The Juilliard School'. The school currently gives tuition to around 850 students across all of its divisions, and is arguably the most prestigious performing arts school in the United States. Juilliard graduates have collectively won 105 Grammy Awards, 62 Tony Awards, 47 Emmy Awards, 26 Bessie Awards, 24 Academy Awards, 16 Pulitzer Prizes, and 12 National Medals for the Arts.¹⁵⁶

The school has a long history of training conductors with a training program for Army Band leaders being created in 1911. A class for orchestral conductors was introduced in 1934 under the tutelage of Albert Stoessel who played an important role in Juilliard's early years, also directing the school's first opera department. Stoessel continued teaching until 1943, and subsequent teachers of note included Frederick Prausnitz (1945–1961) and Jean Morel (1948–1971).¹⁵⁷ In 1972, the school established a graduate conducting program and Sixten Ehrling took over the duties of principal conducting teacher. 1979 saw the Lila Acheson Wallace-funded Young Conductors Project introduced, providing funding to allow

¹⁵⁶ 'About Juilliard,' <http://www.juilliard.edu/about/index.php> (accessed 3 November 2012).

¹⁵⁷ Janet Kessin, Juilliard press release, 13 January 2011.

conducting students more contact with orchestras throughout the program. According to a Juilliard press release, this project, 'was billed as the first year-round program for conductors that provided practical performance experience'.¹⁵⁸ Ehrling was succeeded by Otto-Werner Mueller in 1987, who in turn handed over direction of the program to James DePriest in 2004. In 2011, Alan Gilbert, Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, and James Ross took over the program, taking on the roles of Director and Associate Director respectively. Together they have given fresh impetus to the course, with Gilbert's involvement opening possibilities for collaboration with the Philharmonic. Former graduates of the program have included many luminaries such as Leonard Slatkin, Leif Segerstam, James Levine, John Nelson, Myung-Whun Chung, James Conlon, JoAnn Falletta, Miguel Harth-Bedoya and Gilbert himself.

- **Degree options and course structures**

The Juilliard School offers a Master of Music degree in conducting, which is normally undertaken over a two year period.¹⁵⁹ Though the possibility of doing an Artist Diploma or Graduate Diploma also exists in theory, no students are currently enrolled in these programs.

Masters students are required to accumulate fifty-four credit points over the course of their degree, twenty-four of which come from their Major Study of conducting, with additional points coming from a subject known as Conducting Seminar. Students are also required to attend the first rehearsal of every New York Philharmonic week during the semester, meeting the conductor in the process. This is referred to as 'Orchestra (NY Phil)' on the syllabus, and is part of a collaboration that will be discussed later in some detail.

Students are also required to take seven 'graduate courses' from the general syllabus. Two of these must be in the area of Music History, with a further two coming from the area of

¹⁵⁸ Kessin.

¹⁵⁹ James Ross indicated when interviewed that there may be a possibility of extending this to three years, under certain circumstances, though they are yet to encounter that scenario.

Music Theory. Though not officially compulsory in the curriculum, students ordinarily take supplementary piano lessons (including score reading) and aural training as part of their graduate courses. Aural training is not tailored specifically for conducting students, as it is at some other institutions, but is of a high level. James Ross comments:

It's a part of exam, so nobody gets in to the program who doesn't have a good ear to begin with, but there are some wonderful tough old battle-axe teachers on this faculty, and they've dealt with one famous person after another and set really high standards for them. So we felt comfortable letting them have at our students. And until we figure out that there's something that's really not being addressed, we're going to let Juilliard, the system they already have setup, take care of that side of aural skills specifically.¹⁶⁰

Whilst some conducting professors may find the aural training programs at their institution wanting (or non-existent as is sometimes the case at postgraduate level), Juilliard has a reputation for rigorous standards in this area.

At the beginning of their first semester of studies, all students are required to take a broad placement exam, and may be asked to take further studies over and above the normal course requirements should they have any areas of deficiency be identified. This is not to be confused with the audition examinations, it being a completely separate procedure.¹⁶¹ Table 8 presents the course outline for the Masters program.

¹⁶⁰ James Ross, interview by author, New York, 20 January 2012.

¹⁶¹ 'Application and audition requirements,' <http://www.juilliard.edu/apply/program-information/mm/audition-requirements.php#orchestral-conducting> (accessed 4 November 2012).

Table 8. Master of Music curriculum, Juilliard School.

Year	1		2	
Semester	1	2	3	4
Major Study (Conducting)	6	6	6	6
Conductors' Lab (Orchestra)	1	1	1	1
NY Philharmonic sessions	–	–	–	–
Conductors' Forum	–	–	–	–
Principles of Conducting	2			
Conducting Seminar		2	2	2
Methods of Analysis	2			
Graduate Courses (2 points each)	2	4	4	4
Graduation Performance				2
Total	13	13	13	15

Source: MM degree – Orchestral conducting curriculum, Juilliard School, 2012.

- **The audition**

The Juilliard School receives about seventy applications for their conducting program annually. Applicants are required to submit a curriculum vitae and a video which consists of up to five excerpts, including at least one rehearsal sequence and at least one concert sequence, ideally presenting varied repertoire. These applications are then assessed by Gilbert and Ross, and around fourteen conductors are then invited to do a live audition at Juilliard. This audition is held over two days, and starts with a 45 minute ear training exam, followed by a 90 minute written exam on a wide range of topics. In the afternoon, all candidates are interviewed for 15-20 minutes, and at this time they also have the option to play their primary instrument to demonstrate their musicianship if they choose. Ross feels this is an important part of the selection process:

A number of the people who did get into the program were people who played their instrument and we could hear and be impressed by their musical voice on an instrument, and that made it easier to decide on their behalf.¹⁶²

The nature of a conducting audition means that a conductor may not always have the opportunity to present their 'musical voice' in the best light, for a variety of reasons. Their conducting technique may be under-developed meaning they are unable to communicate all of their ideas to the musicians, or the brief nature of the audition may mean there is no time to develop a relationship with the orchestra. Playing an instrument at a high level can potentially remove any doubts the audition panel may have about a conductor's musicianship, giving them a fuller picture of the capabilities of the conductor in question.

A short demonstration of their keyboard skills is also required, involving basic clef reading, and score reading related to the repertoire chosen for the audition. At the end of this intense first day of activities, approximately six candidates are chosen to continue to the second day, which begins with candidates conducting the lab orchestra. In the first half of the orchestral session all six conductors work for about fifteen minutes on a work of their choice, selected from a group of works pre-determined by the faculty, and a compulsory work.¹⁶³ Following the intermission, three candidates are selected to work further with the orchestra, and Gilbert and Ross effectively treat this part of the process as a lesson, in order to see if they feel they can work with and develop the students selected.

An exit interview is then conducted with the final candidates, where their potential future directions can be discussed, regardless of whether they are accepted to the program or not. In 2011, all three final round candidates were accepted in to the program, and in 2012 one candidate was admitted to the class.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Ross.

¹⁶³ In the case of the 2011 audition the compulsory work was the Rite of Spring.

¹⁶⁴ Ross.

- **The conducting class**

In the 2012-13 academic year the class consisted of four Masters students.¹⁶⁵ Three students being US citizens, one foreign, and a male/female ratio of 3 to 1. As the current course structure is very new, it is too early to speak of average numbers or ratios of any kind. However, the program is committed to having a relatively small number of students. This is partly because Ross and Gilbert prefer a compact class size, but also because the Lyla Acheson Wallace endowment comfortably allows for full scholarships for this number of students. All students accepted into the program therefore study free of charge.¹⁶⁶

The conducting tuition itself takes place in three different settings, which are referred to as lab orchestra sessions, conducting seminars and lessons. For a number of reasons, these sessions are not necessarily regular, and there are often periods of more intense work. This is sometimes due to Gilbert's availability, but can also be due to the students working towards a concert performance.

The school provides fourteen lab orchestra sessions and fourteen lessons per semester, averaging out to around one of each session per week. This may be less than some schools offer in terms of total hours, however, given the remarkably small size of the class, the podium time per student can be said to be equivalent to other high level schools, including most of those investigated in this study.

Lab orchestra sessions involve a relatively large orchestra with a regular string size of 6.5.4.4.3 and full coverage of all wind, brass and percussion parts. An overall orchestra size of around forty-five players is therefore not unusual. For public performances such as the end of semester recitals, the size of the string section can be expanded as required. The players are drawn from the Juilliard student body and are paid an honorarium of twenty-five dollars per rehearsal for their services. Previously, students have also received course credits for their time in the orchestra, and it is expected that this approach will be

¹⁶⁵ One extra guest student was also present for the spring semester of 2012.

¹⁶⁶ Ross.

reintroduced in the future, in addition to the payment of an honorarium.¹⁶⁷ Despite the orchestra being made up of students, the standard of playing can be said to be very high, as Juilliard is one of the best regarded schools in the United States across all areas of music performance.

Whilst these sessions are always recorded on video, students do not necessarily watch the video with their teachers. Ross comments:

I would say they use the video more than we use it. Everything is recorded, so they watch their own tapes. We had a couple of special sessions including one when Haitink came in and did a coaching session and I think we all watched that together... That's not the central part of the program, but from what I understand, they see their own tapes and they also watch their own tapes with each other, so it felt a little bit arbitrary to watch it again here.¹⁶⁸

The video camera therefore plays only a supporting role at Juilliard, being used by the faculty only when there is clear need. It is interesting to note that the students nevertheless watch their videos together on occasion, despite the absence of a teacher. This suggests a healthy class spirit, and supportive atmosphere amongst the students. Where possible, Gilbert and Ross teach together at lab orchestra sessions, making Juilliard the only school investigated where students are receiving input from two teachers during the same session. Other schools may have more than one teacher, but never share lessons on a regular basis. Given that Gilbert is not always available due to his busy schedule, the presence of Ross at every session gives the students a continuity that might otherwise be lacking.

Under normal circumstances, students have lab orchestra for two and a half hours on Friday morning, followed by Conducting Seminar with Ross in the afternoon. In this class no actual conducting takes place, and is instead a forum for the discussion of a wide variety of issues. Topics for conversation have included rehearsal techniques, string bowings, wind and brass techniques and general issues relating to conducting technique. The seminar often has a particular focus over the course of a semester, with the operas of Mozart providing such a focal point for the spring semester of 2012.

¹⁶⁷ James Ross, email to author, 4 December 2012.

¹⁶⁸ James Ross, interview by author, New York, 20 January 2012.

The conducting lesson is then scheduled for 11am on the Saturday morning, and lasts for two and a half to three hours. This group lesson is focused on the repertoire that will be worked on in the next week's lab orchestra, and involves the students conducting two pianos. As such, it can be considered a preparatory lesson for the lab orchestra session of the following week. This approach of having the final class of the week looking forward to the next differs from most other schools – a more common approach being to have the preparatory session the day before the first orchestra rehearsal, as happens at the Sibelius Academy, for example. The advantage of the Juilliard schedule is that students have a good deal of time to digest whatever advice they receive in these sessions, and have the opportunity to fundamentally change their approach to a piece if necessary. However, there is an extra onus on the students to be well prepared, as they will effectively need to have repertoire for two weeks in their system at any given time, conducting one set of repertoire on the Friday, and then another immediately on the Saturday morning. According to Ross this has been a challenge at times for some:

Actually there was a point in the first semester where that became overloading for at least a couple of the people... But they then saw Alan do twenty-five different pieces in the first three and a half weeks and learn more than half of them were things he was doing for the first time too. Then they didn't really feel good about complaining that they had to learn a whole symphony for one week and then have a whole other symphony ready for the next.¹⁶⁹

Ross points out the gulf between repertoire requirements in the student world and the profession. Whilst twenty-five pieces in the space of a few weeks is an extreme example, it highlights the need for students to become adept at learning repertoire quickly.

Two professional pianists (with whom the class work regularly) play from piano reductions of the repertoire for these lessons, and are joined at the keyboards by two students who play from full score. Thus, with eight hands in action, a full and generous realisation of the score is achievable. Ross sees only a small difference in terms of the issues discussed at lessons as opposed to lab orchestra sessions:

¹⁶⁹ Ross.

There's a kind of 'body messing around' that you don't want to do too much in front of orchestras because it makes people feel like puppets and awkward, but to actually be able to touch a hand and an arm and get a feeling of an impulse, that would be something that we actively do here [with pianos] slightly more than in the other situation, but... I don't sit down with a different hat on during one compared to the other.¹⁷⁰

Though these lessons may deal with musical issues just as much as the orchestra sessions, a higher level of physical interaction may occur between teacher and student.

At the end of each semester, the conducting students give a shared public performance with the lab orchestra at the Alice Tully Hall, which also serves as an assessment recital. This gives each semester a clear focal point for both the lab orchestra and the conducting students, and gives valuable performance opportunities to the students, which often are lacking in tertiary conducting programs. Many courses do not provide the opportunity to perform before students give their final graduation recitals. This means students not only miss out on the experiences associated with public performances, including issues such as performance anxiety, but also may miss out on going through a genuine rehearsal process with a concrete goal at the end of it.

Repertoire is mixed throughout the course of study and covers a broad range of repertoire in no particular chronological order. However, the symphonies of Joseph Haydn do appear relatively often in the program, as Gilbert believes that these pieces are very rewarding for a conductor to work with. He has performed these works repeatedly throughout his own career and according to James Ross: 'He feels that something about the sincerity of directness and technique was really helped by doing that.'¹⁷¹ This is a similar view to that held by Panula, who also believes in the importance of conducting works of the classical period, in particular those of Haydn and Mozart. Ordinarily, all students are working on the same repertoire at any given time, with the exception of the periods leading up to the end of semester recital, where each student works with a unique fifteen to twenty minute piece that they will perform. Operatic repertoire is also included, with the 2011-12 season

¹⁷⁰ Ross.

¹⁷¹ Ross.

seeing students work on excerpts from *Don Giovanni*, *La Boheme* and *Lohengrin*. For the *Lohengrin* excerpts the students were fortunate enough to work with singers from the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. This level of access to performers of the highest level on a regular basis is something that is unique to Juilliard. This is as a result of the connections of the faculty, the physical proximity of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic, and the fact that many of these top performers are Juilliard graduates themselves.

- **Graduation**

Due to the current program being very new, no students have graduated from the course at the time of writing. However, it is anticipated that the students' final end of semester recitals, mentioned above, will feature an expanded program and will serve as their graduation recitals. As the program has progressed, students have been increasingly involved as assistants with various ensembles at Juilliard, and these activities will also represent part of their final assessment.¹⁷²

- **A collaborative approach to conductor training for the 21st Century**

Though the Juilliard School has a long and distinguished history in the field of conductor training, Gilbert and Ross took the opportunity to completely rethink the program when asked to take over its delivery. While the program remains grounded in the same tried and tested fundamentals as many others, it is based on ideas that look to the future, both of conducting and of classical music in general. Ross observes:

We're a combination of old fashioned, getting people to be good in front of music and rhythm and sound, but with two people running the program, both Alan and I, who are interested more in how to make classical music come alive now in this century, in the time we live in.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Ross.

¹⁷³ Ross.

When Gilbert and Ross began designing their conducting program for Juilliard, they wrote a vision statement, laying out their goals, ideas and ambitions:

We came up with a visionary document [of] where we think, not so much where conducting programs are going, but where the orchestral world is going and what sort of qualities of leadership and ways of working with orchestras are appropriate now that might not have been so much twenty or thirty years ago.¹⁷⁴

This is an important point, as the nature of the conductor-orchestra relationship has undergone a gradual but fundamental change in recent decades. Perhaps the death of Herbert von Karajan in 1989 can be pointed to as a milestone in this change. Karajan was the stereotypical maestro who demanded complete control and authority over all matters during his long tenure as chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic. In contrast, Simon Rattle, the current chief in Berlin, is widely regarded as a collaborator, rather than an autocrat. The conductor has lost the power to 'hire and fire', and now must earn the respect of the musicians for a successful collaboration to occur. Indeed, it is common practice in today's orchestral world for players to take a leading role in selecting their Chief Conductor, as well as deciding whether a guest conductor will return in the future. It can therefore be argued that the right to 'hire and fire' is now in the hands of the orchestral musicians, rather than the conductor. This is a change in the relationship which has substantial implications for the way a conductor must work.

Ross and Gilbert's vision statement asks: 'What is the new developing model of conductor/orchestra interconnectedness?'¹⁷⁵ It goes on to speak of the concept of an 'Orphestra' – a hypothetical orchestra operating with a conductor that embodies many of the traits of New York's Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. This orchestra famously performs without a conductor and is one of the few orchestral models that approaches the ideals of democracy. The orchestra has found a workable balance whereby all musicians are able to contribute to the rehearsal process, whilst retaining some form of hierarchy in order to avoid

¹⁷⁴ Ross.

¹⁷⁵ James Ross, 'Juilliard Conducting vision statement', unpublished text.

complete anarchy.¹⁷⁶ Clearly, Gilbert and Ross feel there are lessons to be learned for conductors from this collaborative approach that can help them find the right balance between leadership and collaboration. In keeping with these collaborative ideals, Ross aims to include the musicians playing in the lab orchestra in the discussion during lessons:

It seemed to us over the course of the first semester that it was mostly the same players, which gave us the great opportunity... for the orchestra to learn more about what we think actually this organism of conductor and orchestra together is. How that functions.¹⁷⁷

Whilst many would view the orchestra as being an organism in itself, which the conductor then interacts with, Ross views the conductor and orchestra together as being a single entity. The idea that orchestra members are also there to learn about the nature of their relationship with conductors is typical of the open, inclusive approach taken to teaching by Gilbert and Ross. It also ties in with their preference to take an active approach to teaching during the class itself, rather than waiting to discuss problems in a video session, as discussed in Part One. For them it is important to keep everybody in the room fully engaged at all times.

This theme of collaboration extends to the fact that two teachers are often working together in the same classroom. That this is at all possible is largely down to the strong relationship that Gilbert and Ross enjoy, both as musicians and friends, having known each other since their time as fellow students at Harvard University. Ross enjoys sharing teaching responsibilities and observes:

One of the nice things is having two people bouncing opinions off of each other and there's a little bit more interplay. I think also it's new for any Music Director of the [New York] Philharmonic to put themselves in the situation where there's somebody else saying things around them, and that they go back and forth between being in charge and being not in charge and watching.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ A symphony orchestra in Moscow also worked without conductor in the 1920s, but it was disbanded after a few years due to the cost of extra rehearsals.

¹⁷⁷ James Ross, interview by author, New York, January 20, 2012.

¹⁷⁸ Ross.

Clearly there is potential for a student to gain from the situation of having two teachers rather than one, provided the situation is managed correctly, and the student is not overwhelmed with suggestions or receives conflicting advice. If the teachers' ideas and values are aligned (as seems to be the case at Juilliard), then it may be that their combined views can add an extra layer of depth to proceedings. As Ross underlines, this approach requires the putting aside of egos to some extent, something that not all conductors working at the highest level may be able to do.

The fact that Juilliard's conducting program director is also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic is clearly of huge benefit to the program, providing a bridge between the two institutions, and opening numerous avenues for collaboration. As part of their studies, students are required to attend the first rehearsal of all working weeks of the Philharmonic, and afterwards are given the opportunity to meet the conductor working with the orchestra and discuss the rehearsal and their general experiences working in the profession. This provides students with a window into the reality of being a professional conductor, and enlightens them as to what challenges that they may face themselves in the future. According to Ross, Gilbert would like the New York Philharmonic connection to give the Juilliard students an experience similar to one he himself had earlier in his career:

Alan had a great experience at the Cleveland Orchestra as assistant conductor, and he wants for these guys in this program here [to have] the same sort of experience... drinking in the ethos and the feelings of how an orchestra works and how people work with them, and watching it as it gets better and it gets worse and goes in to a dead end and flies high. Just so that they see all those possibilities and they're comfortable with them and they're not kidding themselves what it's actually going to feel like, when, for example, they have assistant conductor auditions and are suddenly confronted with a big energy, the likes of which they haven't felt when they're in the training program.¹⁷⁹

Making the step from the controlled environment of a university course to the reality of working with an orchestra such as the New York Philharmonic, can be a daunting one. By allowing the students to follow the activities of the orchestra on a regular basis throughout

¹⁷⁹ Ross.

their studies, students are continuously reminded of what exactly it is they are trying to achieve and ultimately are aiming for. This serves to put everything they do in the program in a professional context. Giving them access to the conductors allows them to interact with seasoned professionals who have already made that journey, and also to form relationships which may be of benefit to them in their later careers.

Whilst the Juilliard conducting students are currently regular visitors to the Philharmonic, Ross hopes that this exchange will go both ways in the near future:

What we would like to do is incorporate more Philharmonic players in lab orchestra over here. So for example, a student leads a rehearsal and then we have someone like Phil Myers or Phil Smith (section leaders of the Philharmonic) talk to them afterwards about what got done, what was OK, and what was a waste of time from their point of view.¹⁸⁰

Musicians of this calibre would doubtless have much to offer in this setting, being able to give conductors an insight as to how their work might be viewed in the professional world. This feedback would likely go beyond technical issues, and delve into the students' abilities to rehearse effectively, an area that is often a challenge for inexperienced conductors.¹⁸¹

According to Ross, the relationship with the Philharmonic is one that may continue for some students at the end of their studies:

The guys here can develop a relationship of comfort with the orchestra and depending on how their conducting develops here through the program, they would be potentially in consideration for assistant conductors over there. It's a way for Alan to be working with and developing a team of assistant conductors, from whom he can chose, who he's comfortable with and who he's invested in as well.¹⁸²

Such an arrangement has the potential to benefit all parties involved. Gilbert and the Philharmonic would benefit from being able to hire staff conductors who are known quantities, and for the students this would be an invaluable first step towards a career. As Ross alludes to, they will likely have developed a comfortable relationship with the orchestra

¹⁸⁰ Ross.

¹⁸¹ As discussed in Section 1.7.

¹⁸² Ross.

through their studies, thus making the transition to a role with professional responsibilities considerably easier. Thus the course could be considered an ideal stepping-stone to such a position.

- **Summary**

The defining characteristic of the Juilliard School's conducting program is its relationship with the New York Philharmonic. Though this relationship is still under development, students of the program already gain clear benefits from these ties, through regular attendance of concerts and rehearsals, meaningful contact with the Philharmonic's guest conductors, and of course, working with Gilbert on a regular basis. It is unusual for a conductor of Gilbert's calibre to take on a position leading a tertiary-level conducting program, largely due to the time commitment involved. This problem is overcome to a large extent by the role played by Ross, whose regular presence gives students continuity, and who is able to oversee the students' broader education. This relationship in itself is of interest, as it often leads to the unusual situation of two teachers working in tandem with the students.

The program is also notable for its low student numbers, with only four students enrolled, by far the smallest class observed in this study. Gilbert and Ross can therefore be highly selective in who they accept as students, and give each one whatever personalised attention may be necessary for the duration of their degree. Given the program's resources and the possibility of further links for students with the New York Philharmonic after their graduation, one can conclude that the Juilliard program gives the talented student a real possibility of launching a successful conducting career. It will be of great interest to observe how the program develops over the coming years, and in particular, what the school's relationship with the New York Philharmonic will ultimately bring.

2.6 The Peabody Institute, Baltimore

Situated in Baltimore, Maryland, The Peabody Institute was founded in 1857 by philanthropist George Peabody, and is one of the oldest conservatories in the United States. In 1977, it became a division of Johns Hopkins University, one of America's leading private universities. The Institute itself consists of two parts - The Peabody Conservatory, and the Peabody Preparatory School. By US standards the Conservatory is relatively small with around 650 students.¹⁸³

The Director of the Peabody Institute, Jeffrey Sharky, describes conducting as one of the school's signature programs, pointing out it builds on a strong tradition.¹⁸⁴ In 1961, with a grant from the Ford Foundation, the American Conductor's Project was founded at the Peabody Conservatory. This program involved four young conductors coming to Baltimore for a three month residency in April, May and June, with the program running for three years. Students worked with the leading conductors of the day, and a young James Levine (at the age of 20) was one of the notable participants.¹⁸⁵ In 1979, Frederick Prausnitz founded the Graduate Conducting Program, teaching at the school until the appointment of Gustav Meier and Markand Thakar in 1996, who continue to lead the program at the time of writing in 2013. The school can point to a substantial list of successful conducting graduates, including Danail Rachev, Ilyich Rivas, Ken Lam, Case Scaglione, Carolyn Kuan, Kazem Abdullah, and Tomasz Golka, and students have gone on to staff positions at orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, and Utah Symphony. Recently, Marin Alsop, Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony, was appointed Distinguished Visiting Artist, and the school enjoys a working relationship with the orchestra.

¹⁸³Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University information, <http://www.collegestate.com/colleges/peabody-institute-of-johns-hopkins-university> (accessed 20 October 2012).

¹⁸⁴ Peabody Conservatory conducting program promotional video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwrfFw8Z87s> (accessed 20 October 2012).

¹⁸⁵ Peabody Conservatory conducting program promotional video.

- **The audition**

Between eighty and one hundred students apply to study conducting at Peabody annually.¹⁸⁶ Candidates are initially required to upload a video via the internet which is then viewed by the faculty, in addition to the school's regular requirements of a resume, academic transcripts and three written references. The school is very specific as to the content of the video, requiring three or four excerpts, each two to three minutes in length, consisting of contrasting standard repertoire demonstrating a variety of styles and tempi.¹⁸⁷ Gustav Meier, who has seen many demonstration videos throughout his decades of teaching, has some interesting thoughts about what he likes to see in such videos. Often, rehearsal excerpts are stated as a requirement, but Meier prefers to avoid this, feeling rehearsals are all too easily staged for the camera:

When I pick students to come to Peabody or a masterclass, I never insist on rehearsing [in a video], just show me music making with an ensemble, and I want to see music. That's all I want to see.¹⁸⁸

Ideally this video should be with orchestra, but if this is not possible a small ensemble is considered sufficient.

Approximately fifteen applicants are then invited to attend a live audition in Baltimore at the Conservatory. All applicants conduct selected excerpts with an orchestra for approximately ten minutes and also have a personal interview with the faculty. Around three to four applicants are normally taken into the program, though this is naturally dependent on the number of vacancies in the class at any given time. For Thakar, however, the audition process can sometimes be a source of frustration:

I think every one of us who sits on that panel has been wrong. Wrong both ways. I'd love to see us not do auditions, because in ten minutes, what can you really say? And I can tell you we've admitted some people who I thought

¹⁸⁶ Linda Goodwin, email to author, 15 November 2012.

¹⁸⁷ 'Audition requirements,' <http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/conservatory/conducting/auditions.html> (accessed 21 October 2012).

¹⁸⁸ Gustav Meier 'Gustav Meier interview, Part 4,' <http://www.banddirector.com/article/rl-past-features/interview-with-gustav-meier> (accessed 24 October 2012).

this person is going nowhere and they've blossomed. And the other way – where it's not quite working out how I expected.¹⁸⁹

This is a similar view to that expressed by Schlaefli,¹⁹⁰ and is a significant challenge to all conservatories, as the importance of the audition cannot be overestimated. In comparison to other schools investigated, the audition process at Peabody is relatively short, though whether an extension of the actual podium time in the audition would make a real difference is debatable. Surprisingly, there are no separate written exams or aural tests as part of the audition procedure, though aural tests may form a part of the interview. This is a notable exclusion in comparison to other schools, which seems to reflect the program's emphasis on the practical 'hands-on' aspects of conducting. However, successful applicants are required to sit a placement exam covering music theory, music history and ear-training prior to commencing their studies.¹⁹¹

- **Degree options and course structures**

Like many schools in the United States, the Peabody Conservatory offers a Master of Music and a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting. Additionally, there also exists the option to do a Graduate Performance Diploma or an Artists Diploma, for those who wish to focus on the conducting tuition itself, and not take other supporting subjects.

Master of Music students are required to collect a total of 48 credit points over the course of their studies (normally two years), with 20 of these points coming under the heading of 'Major Area', which consists of the primary conducting subjects. This includes the weekly conducting classes which are classified as the 'Major Lesson' in the curriculum, with students also receiving points for their final recitals. A subject referred to as Conducting Seminar is also required, though in practice, this subject is delivered together with the Major Lesson. Additional supporting subjects that students are required to study include classes in

¹⁸⁹ Markand Thakar, interview by author, Baltimore, 26 January 2012.

¹⁹⁰ See Section 2.4.

¹⁹¹ 2012 Peabody Conservatory Catalog, 78.

musicology, orchestration, early music, counterpoint, analysis, and an elective of the student's choice. These are all general subjects for students of this level, and not aimed specifically at conductors, and there is some flexibility as to when students enrol in which subject. Though no aural training class is prescribed in the curriculum, the Peabody Catalog states that, 'Deficiencies in the areas of music theory, ear-training, music history, keyboard skills, or English must be corrected by remedial study at the Conservatory.'¹⁹² Students who are considered to need more work in this area can therefore take aural training as an extra subject on top of their regular studies.

The Doctor of Musical Arts degree is normally completed in three years, with 60 credit points being collected over the period of studies. The 'Major Area' of study is largely similar to that Masters degree, with the addition of a series of four recitals and an academic document, required for graduation (discussed below under Graduation). Students are required to take a short course in research, and must enrol in appropriate subjects in Musicology and Music Theory in order to collect 12 points. A further 16 points in electives are required over the period of study, one subject being a non-music humanities subject. Table 9 outlines the course outline for both degrees.

¹⁹² 2012 Peabody Conservatory Catalog, 79.

Table 9. Conducting curriculum overview, Peabody Conservatory.

Master of Music	Points	Doctor of Musical Arts	Points
MAJOR AREA		MAJOR AREA	
Major lesson (conducting)	16	Major lesson (conducting)	16
Conducting Seminar	2	Conducting Seminar	4
Recital	2	Recital (x4)	8
		Document	2
SUPPORTING SUBJECTS		SUPPORTING SUBJECTS	
Music Bibliography	2	Musicology Colloquium	6
Musicology Seminars	6	Graduate Research	2
Music Theory Counterpoint	3	Music Theory Seminars	6
Music Theory Analysis	3	Consultation	–
Orchestration	6	Program Notes	0
Early Music Performance	4	Electives	13
Electives	4	Humanities Elective	3
Total	48		60

Source: Peabody Catalog, 2012.

The financial cost of gaining a university degree in America is often very high compared to other parts of the world, and the Peabody Institute is no exception in this regard. Tuition fees for the 2012-13 academic year are US\$38,500 per year for degree programs (Masters and DMA for conductors) and US\$32,475 annually for diploma programs.¹⁹³ No scholarships exist specifically for conductors, but all students applying to study at the Peabody Conservatory are considered for a Peabody Scholarship at the time of admission.¹⁹⁴ Financial aid is available in the form of student loans, and graduate students are able to apply for teaching assistantships. The conducting department currently offers two teaching

¹⁹³ 'Cost of attendance,' <http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/conservatory/financialaid/cost.html> (accessed 20 October 2012).

¹⁹⁴ 'Scholarships,' <http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/conservatory/financialaid/scholarships.html> (accessed 20 October 2012).

assistantships which cover 75% of tuition costs, and conducting students can also apply for assistantships in other relevant areas such as sight singing, music history and music theory.¹⁹⁵ These options help to assist students cover fees, which it should be noted are typical for a private university in the United States.

- **The conducting class**

The size of the Peabody conducting class varies from year to year, but usually consists of around seven to ten students.¹⁹⁶ In the academic year 2012-13 there were a total of seven students, comprised of two Masters students, one DMA, one Artist Diploma, and three Graduate Performer Diploma students. The male/female ratio was 6 to 1, although Thakar indicates this is unusually low, with a typical ratio being around 5 to 3.

Students study conducting together as a group, regardless of which degree they are enrolled in, with the class meeting on Monday and Tuesday of each week. Thakar points out that this schedule has the advantage of leaving the later part of the week free, when guest conducting opportunities are more likely to arise for both faculty and the more advanced students.¹⁹⁷ Mondays begin with two one and a half hour sessions with piano and string quintet; this formation being preferred by Meier to the use of two pianos alone. This is followed in the evening by a two hour session with the resident practice orchestra, referred to simply as the 'Conductor's Orchestra'. The orchestra is relatively large, having a string size of around 8.6.4.4.2, plus a full complement of woodwinds, brass and percussion as required by the music being played. It is made up of current students of the Peabody Conservatory, who must pass an audition and are remunerated for their services.¹⁹⁸ Despite the non-professional nature of the ensemble, Meier has great faith in their ability:

¹⁹⁵ Goodwin.

¹⁹⁶ Thakar.

¹⁹⁷ Thakar.

¹⁹⁸ 'Orchestral conducting,' <http://www.peabody.jhu.edu/conservatory/conducting/orch-conducting.html> (accessed 3 November 2012).

Those young students, they can play. It's amazing that you can put Concerto for Orchestra of Bartok, we can put in front of them, and we don't have to stop because they are not making it, we have to stop because the conductor is not making it. They're so good.¹⁹⁹

Tuesday morning sees another 90 minute session with piano and string quartet, followed by another 90 minute session with the orchestra. This gives students a total of 4.5 hours with piano and strings, and 3.5 hours with full orchestra every week of semester, which can be said to be a generous amount of podium time for students, comparing favourably with most schools. The placing of a string quintet session in between the full orchestra sessions allows students the chance to identify problems and experiment with the small group before trying their solutions once more with the full orchestra. This integrated structure of preparatory ensemble and orchestra is unique amongst the schools that have been examined in this study.

Meier and Thakar divide the schedule between them into blocks of several weeks, so that there is a degree of continuity in the teaching. According to Thakar, he and Meier play different pedagogical roles through the student's learning process:

A former student described it to me as, 'Gustav is about teaching people the practicalities of existing in the profession.' And I'm about the ideal of the conducting technique, the conducting process and music making, and I think both are necessary.²⁰⁰

Thakar freely explores various issues relating to the art of conducting, while Meier is sharpening their skills for the rigours of what they will encounter in the profession. It seems this balance of teaching styles constitutes a significant part of the Peabody program's success, particularly in consistently producing young conductors who are able to successfully make the first step into the profession.

Though orchestral sessions are videotaped, there is no designated session for reviewing the recordings formally. However, both Thakar and Meier have occasional informal one to

¹⁹⁹ Meier.

²⁰⁰ Thakar.

one lessons with students, and this is often seen as an appropriate time to review videos.

Meier is certainly a fan of the technology:

This [video] is fantastic for today's conductors. You see – does the communication work? Is it my fault that they can't follow properly or that they lose the tempo or they play too loud?... In many ways that is the best teacher you can have today.²⁰¹

This closely reflects the views of Panula, who asserts that the camera is in fact more important than the teacher.²⁰² Meier, however, takes a less regimented approach to its use than the Finn.

Conducting students also have opportunities to perform with Peabody's student orchestras and ensembles and are regularly involved in the opera program, conducting premiere performances of chamber operas. Additionally, once or twice a year the students have the opportunity to conduct the Baltimore Symphony in a rehearsal dedicated to the conducting students of Peabody. This has been in place since Marin Alsop became Music Director of the orchestra, and she takes a keen interest in the conducting program at Peabody, Alsop having herself studied with Meier at the Tanglewood Music Centre in 1989. The two institutions also collaborate in the form of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra-Peabody Conducting Fellowship, which covers the fees for a student to do a one year Artist Diploma at Peabody, and gives the student further access to the orchestra and Marin Alsop throughout the year.²⁰³ Additionally, all Peabody conducting students have the opportunity to work as cover conductors with the symphony at some point during their studies.²⁰⁴ Much like the Juilliard program, this gives students an important window into the profession, allowing them to observe and interact with high-level professional conductors in a working environment.

²⁰¹ Meier.

²⁰² See p.73.

²⁰³ 'Alexandra Arrieche receives BSO-Peabody Conducting Fellowship,' http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/classicalmusic/2012/08/alexandra_arrieche_receives_bs.html (accessed 3 November 2012).

²⁰⁴ Thakar.

The conducting class ordinarily focusses on one major work per week, or a selection of smaller works. Repertoire is not tackled in any particular order or chronological progression due to the mixed nature of the class, but a broad range of repertoire from the classical period onwards is covered, including accompaniment and concertos. Again, the two teachers have slightly different expectations of how much repertoire each student should cover themselves in class. Thakar comments:

Gustav wants them to get through more repertoire, and I want them to get through less repertoire better, and I think the combination ends up being a good thing.²⁰⁵

The class also spends two weeks a year working on an opera excerpt or selected operatic arias, in conjunction with the opera department.²⁰⁶

- **Graduation**

Master of Music students are required to give a recital at the end of their studies, with the students being responsible for organising all aspects of the performance, including the forming of the ensemble or orchestra to be conducted. Ordinarily the orchestra is gathered from within the student body of the Peabody Conservatory. Thakar acknowledges this is not an easy undertaking:

Yes, it has its challenges, because students are busy. So they have to figure out a program that's going to work for them. They're also going to want to get a video from it [for use in job auditions], and it has to be something that the students want to play so they'll volunteer to participate. It's the whole thing, the nuts and bolts, and it's really good to have to do, to understand from beginning to end the whole process.²⁰⁷

As Thakar points out, students must come to terms with the entire process of presenting a concert – initial programming, organising music, scheduling, publicity, rehearsal planning,

²⁰⁵ Thakar.

²⁰⁶ Thakar.

²⁰⁷ Thakar.

and not least of all, recruitment of musicians. Even if they themselves may not be directly responsible for these organisational elements later in their careers, the experience gained will give a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by parts of the orchestral organisation that they might not otherwise engage with. Bringing together a full complement of musicians also draws on the conducting student's social skills, as recent Peabody student Gemma New underlines: 'You really have to be good at networking and reaching out to people.'²⁰⁸ This encourages young conductors to actively engage with their instrumental colleagues, something that may be beneficial beyond the issue of organising performances. The negative aspect of this organisational work for the conductor is that it may distract them from the musical task at hand. Recitals are expected to be around an hour in length, but otherwise students have a great deal of freedom as to what is presented.

The graduation procedure for DMA students has more requirements. Students are required to give three live recitals and must also submit a video tape of a public performance for which they were engaged as conductor within seven years of completion of other course requirements. The final live recital takes the form of a lecture-recital, and is supported by submission of an analytical or historical essay related to the works being performed in the recital.²⁰⁹ Just as is the case for Masters students, DMA students must form their own orchestras and organise all aspects of the performances. It is interesting that a school that provides generous amounts of podium time during studies places this requirement on students, particularly when multiple recitals are required. Certainly, this practice contrasts sharply with the graduation procedures of leading European schools where an orchestra (and often a professional orchestra) is provided. However, the advantage for Peabody is that school resources, in particular the orchestras, are not being used in these processes, leaving them available for students to exploit fully in a learning environment.

²⁰⁸ Gemma New, email to author, 19 November 2012.

²⁰⁹ 2012 Peabody Conservatory Catalog, 104-105.

- **Summary**

The conducting program of the Peabody Conservatory is a practically orientated course, with the focus of studies lying firmly on the weekly conducting lessons. Both the preparatory ensemble and the orchestra provided for these lessons are amongst the largest encountered in this study, giving students much meaningful podium time. The integration of preparatory sessions and orchestra sessions provides a dynamic learning environment for students, whereby specific issues identified in the first orchestra session can be thoroughly investigated with the ensemble before returning to the orchestra.

The emphasis on practical elements begins at the audition process, with every invited candidate conducting the orchestra. This is in contrast to other schools, where some invited candidates may not have the opportunity to conduct, having done poorly in written exams. At the other end of their studies, students are required to form their own orchestra for their final graduation recitals, giving them practical experience in a number of non-musical areas. Less weight is placed on supporting subjects than some other schools. From this perspective, some parallels can be drawn with the Sibelius Academy, which also takes a very free, non-structured approach to this aspect of studies.

Specific to the Peabody Conservatory in the context of this study is the presence of two teachers working independently with the same group of students. Given the success of the program over the past decade, this approach seems to work well, and perhaps benefits from the fact that the two teachers are tackling the challenge of training conductors from different perspectives; with Meier being practically orientated and Thakar taking a more holistic approach. Indeed, the strength of the Peabody Conservatory's conducting program seems to lie in the presence of these two teachers, combined with its generous offering of regular podium time for the students with a high quality orchestra.

2.7 The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Established in 1817, the University of Michigan was the first public university to open in the northwest of America, moving in 1837 to Ann Arbor, where it is currently situated, just west of the city of Detroit. In 2010 the University had 58,947 students enrolled and employed 8,791 teaching staff.²¹⁰ With a population of around 114,000, Ann Arbor can be considered a university town with a relatively young demographic.²¹¹

The School of Music, Theatre and Dance was formed in 1880 and consistently ranks as one of the best performing arts schools in the United States.²¹² It currently has a student body of 1,100 and has approximately 150 faculty members.²¹³ Conducting has long been regarded as an area of strength within the school, with both the orchestral and choral forms of the discipline having developed a national reputation for excellence. This is due in part to the continuity the program has enjoyed, with key staff serving on the faculty for extended periods of time. From 1976 – 1995 Gustav Meier served as professor of orchestral conducting, and was succeeded by Kenneth Kiesler, who remains conducting professor at the time of writing in 2013.²¹⁴ Thus, the conducting class has had just two teachers in the last thirty-seven years. Successful graduates from the school have included Mei-Ann Chen, Christopher Lees, Laura Jackson, Joana Carneiro, Tania Miller, James Feddeck and Yaniv Dinur.

²¹⁰ 'Facts and Figures,' <http://vpcomm.umich.edu/aboutum/home/factfigs.php> (accessed 20 November 2012).

²¹¹ 'Ann_Arbor, Michigan,' <http://www.city-data.com/city/Ann-Arbor-Michigan.html> (accessed 20 November 2012).

²¹² 'About the school,' <http://www.music.umich.edu/about/> (accessed 20 November 2012).

²¹³ 'Information for partents,' http://www.music.umich.edu/prospective_students/info_parents.htm (accessed 20 November 2012).

²¹⁴ 'Gustav Meier's farewell,' http://www.ur.umich.edu/9495/Apr17_95/meier.htm (accessed 21 November 2012).

- **Degree options and course structures**

The conducting program of the University of Michigan offers a Master of Music degree and a Doctor of Musical Arts. Students undertaking the Masters degree are required to collect a total of 32 credits over the course of their degree. Students must collect a minimum of ten points for orchestral conducting through the weekly conducting seminar and a subject referred to as 'Directed Performance in Orchestral Conducting'. This subject encompasses any extra guidance a student might receive in the lead up to their final recitals. In addition and concurrent to their primary conducting studies, orchestral conducting students are required to study choral conducting for one semester, and this is reciprocated, with choral specialists taking one semester of orchestral conducting. This approach gives both sets of students additional high level training which will doubtless be of benefit later in their careers. Orchestral conductors will inevitably work with choirs (and singers more generally) at some point in their lives, and even one semester of tuition will give them a head start on their colleagues in an area which is sometimes given little attention.

Students are required to take courses in aural skills, music theory, musicology and a further elective of their own choice. Tuition on their primary instrument is also a requirement, and they are also expected to play in an ensemble. This is normally the school's symphony orchestra, but can also be one of the school's choirs, if the student is vocally capable and already has orchestral experience. In this way students learn how it feels to be on the other side of the baton, and are able to have the experience of playing under the conducting faculty. Table 10 provides an outline of the requirements for the Masters degree. Credit requirements listed are minimum requirements. It is assumed more credits will be collected in certain areas.

Table 10. Master of Music curriculum, University of Michigan.

Subject	Minimum credits
Seminar in Orchestral Conducting	4
Directed Performance in Orchestral Conducting	2
Seminar in Choral Conducting	2
Aural Skills for Conductors	4
Music Theory	3
Musicology	3
Music Theory or Musicology	3
Ensemble	–
Final Performance	–
Electives as appropriate	–
Minimum Total Requirement	32

Source: The University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance Student Handbook, 2012-13.

Of particular interest is the program's aural course, which is designed specifically for conductors and taught by the school's Aural Skills Co-ordinator, Judith Petty. Each student has an individual one-hour lesson per week, in addition to occasional group classes. Petty comments on how her work with conductors differs from that with other students:

It is more individual and intensive. I use whatever methods are appropriate for each person's level of expertise, including some overlap with our regular aural skills classes, but also for skills specifically needed by conductors, such as score study, extra work on clefs, and analysis.²¹⁵

The areas covered may occasionally go beyond the bounds of what might be considered normal for a conventional aural training course. She further details her approach in the classes:

²¹⁵ Judith Petty, email to author, 13 February 2013.

Most of the training takes place through singing, both fixed-do solfège and scale degree number singing, for example of chord progression arpeggiations. We also use the piano for score reading practice, but most of the methods are for musicianship, training to hear more of the music, and to be able to aurally analyse and interpret structure and musical styles.²¹⁶

Due to the one to one nature of the tuition, Petty is able to work with students to build whatever skills they need to develop in order to improve their listening skills and aural imagination. This would be difficult to achieve in a classroom situation, as students' abilities in these areas can vary quite substantially, something that Petty herself confirms has been her experience.²¹⁷ It is the only aural course encountered in this study that provides ongoing individual attention, and is no doubt a valuable part of the students' studies.

The DMA degree normally requires three years for completion, although in theory it can be done in two years if the student has already completed a Master's degree at the school. In addition to conducting classes, students take the aural course detailed above for one year, and also take courses in French, German and Italian diction should they not already be proficient in these areas. Students continue to study music theory and musicology and must also take a pedagogy course as well as a course in bibliographic studies. Doctoral students are required to act as assistants on two to three productions during their studies (normally opera productions) and also act as Music Director for one of the two non-music-major orchestras for at least a term. Students are also encouraged to take lessons on their primary instrument and play (or sing) in an ensemble, though this is not officially a requirement.

All students are automatically granted scholarships and are therefore not required to pay any tuition fees. Doctoral students additionally receive health care and a stipend of approximately US\$10,000 per year, making the program additionally attractive for students.

²¹⁶ Petty.

²¹⁷ Petty.

- **The audition**

Applicants are initially required to submit their resume, academic record and a short video demonstrating their conducting. The video must be at least ten minutes in duration and include footage of a performance and a rehearsal with either orchestra or small ensemble. Applicants are also required to speak directly to the camera, talking about themselves and their musical background, and what their goals are in pursuing graduate studies in conducting.²¹⁸

In 2012 the University received around eighty applications for the Masters program and forty for the DMA.²¹⁹ Approximately twenty to twenty-five candidates are normally invited to Ann Arbor to do a live audition which is spread over two days. On the first day, all invited candidates have the opportunity to conduct a chamber orchestra for around twelve to fifteen minutes in two contrasting works, usually involving one rhythmic piece and a slow movement from a classical symphony.²²⁰ Candidates also sit for a written examination that covers the audition repertoire and general questions relating to the orchestra, music history and theory. This is followed by an aural exam specifically designed for conductors. Applicants are given the score for a short piece of music that begins with a small selection of instruments playing, gradually building up to full orchestra. Candidates have one minute to study the score and are then given three hearings of a recording of the piece, in which various errors and inaccuracies have been deliberately included. These faults then need to be identified and commented on. This examination not only tests the students' listening abilities, but also their ability to read and comprehend a score in a short period of time.

A short break follows during which the faculty led by Kiesler selects around ten candidates who are then interviewed. As part of the interview Kiesler asks candidates to

²¹⁸ 'Graduate requirements – Auditions,' http://www.music.umich.edu/departments-/conducting/auditions_smgrad.htm (accessed 21 November, 2012).

²¹⁹ Kiesler observes that recently the number of Masters applicants has been in decline, but the number of DMA applicants has increased strongly.

²²⁰ In 2011 this repertoire was Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and the slow movement from Mozart's *Symphony No.31 K.297*.

demonstrate their abilities at the keyboard, though he is quick to stress that not too much emphasis is placed on these skills:

This is not a pianist's programme, like other places where they have to be excellent pianists in order to get in. Because we've had wonderful violinists and violists and trumpet players and so forth – singers as well. So they have to play, and they have to be able to do certain things at the keyboard, transposition and so forth, but if they don't realise a full score and they can't play even a Mozart Sonata, I'm not worried about it.²²¹

Following the interviews around six or seven conductors are chosen to proceed to the second day, where they have the opportunity to conduct one of the school's large orchestras. Several works from the standard repertoire are selected for this stage, with recent repertoire including Mussourgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, *Nimrod* from Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, and the opening of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. Occasionally, Kiesler also gives a private lesson to applicants of interest:

Fairly frequently, after the second day and conducting has concluded, I'll spend some time with someone and maybe give them a thirty minute lesson and work with them, and get a sense of what the working is like and give them a sense of what it would be like [to study in the program].²²²

This has some parallels with the approach of Gilbert and Ross at the Juilliard School, who like to work with the students who make the final round. By taking this approach, Kiesler is able to get a feel for how quickly the student can adapt to new ideas, and can push them in specific areas where there may be some doubt as to their ability.

Following this extensive procedure a final selection is made. The number of students selected to enter the program varies from year to year, based on the number of places currently available. However, a common intake might involve accepting two Masters students and one DMA student.²²³

²²¹ Kenneth Kiesler, interview by author, Ann Arbor, 17 January 2012.

²²² Kiesler.

²²³ Kiesler.

- **The conducting class**

In the academic year of 2012/13 the conducting program at the University of Michigan had six students, three at the Masters level and three enrolled in the DMA program. According to Kiesler, his ideal is to have seven students. However, the exact number and make-up of the class does vary over time for various reasons, such as students leaving earlier or later than anticipated. In 2012-13 the male/female ratio was 2 to 1, though Kiesler says the number of female conductors has often been higher:

There was one time which I thought was quite significant where the three people in the Doctoral programme in residence were female and the two [who] hadn't quite finished yet, and were still going through the system, were also female. So all five doctoral students at once at one point, which I thought was really a high moment and actually historically quite significant.²²⁴

According to Kiesler, many of his female students have been more successful in career terms than the men, and the school has certainly educated many well-known female conductors, such as Tania Miller, Joana Carneiro and Laura Jackson.²²⁵

Conducting studies are focused on the conducting seminar, which is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12.30-2.30pm. This involves the conductors working under the guidance of Kiesler with either an ensemble or a chamber orchestra, the exact size of which varies significantly throughout the course of the year. The basic formation utilised is string quintet, wind quintet and piano. This is then expanded as required, up to a maximum size of seventeen strings, with double winds and brass. This structure differs from other schools investigated, in that there is no clear delineation between time with a preparatory ensemble (such as two pianos) and time with orchestra. Instead, Kiesler tailors the size of the ensemble to the repertoire and particular circumstances of each week. As discussed in Part One, Kiesler has a strong dislike of working with two pianos, thus the omission of this formation from Michigan's conducting studies is no surprise.²²⁶ Instrumental students playing

²²⁴ Kiesler.

²²⁵ Kiesler.

²²⁶ See Section 1.3.

in conducting seminars are paid an honorarium for their time, though they may elect to receive course credits in lieu of payment.²²⁷

Repertoire is not studied in any particular chronological order, but is mixed. Music studied ranges from the baroque period (the school having a strong reputation in this area) through to music of the present day. Instrumental concertos are often included and occasional sessions are dedicated to operatic repertoire. Kiesler does have a preference for the order that repertoire is studied, but finds that circumstances do not always fit his ideal:

I usually start with string music and slower music, and classical music. Could be one or the other, but they come around the same time. Then we go from there. Here it's a little skewed, because I want them to work on music that I'm conducting. So if I happen to be doing Mahler's Fifth in November and they've just started in September, they're going to be working on Mahler's Fifth.²²⁸

Thus, students are able to benefit from watching an experienced conductor rehearse a work that they know themselves from the inside. The knowledge that has been absorbed through observation can then be transferred back to the conducting seminar. However, Kiesler in the past experimented with a more structured approach:

My first few years here I tried something different. For example, we did two or three weeks of music with mixed meter, we did two or three weeks of slow movements, we did two or three weeks on violin concerti, show pieces with difficult accompaniment and Chopin concerti, Tzigane.... so I divided it up by skills and outcomes that we wanted to achieve, and I don't do that anymore.²²⁹

Finally, Kiesler came to the conclusion that a mixed approach works best, as adopted by most schools in this study.

All seminars are videotaped for later analysis as required, though there are no designated sessions for video review. Kiesler comments on his views on the use of video:

Well, they use it for their tool, the students do. I use it less often. I want to do it right then with the ensemble, I want them to feel it, try it, hear it. You know a huge influence on me was Giulini and I worked with him off and on for a

²²⁷ Kenneth Kiesler, email to author, 1 February 2013.

²²⁸ Kenneth Kiesler, interview by author, Ann Arbor, 17 January 2012.

²²⁹ Kiesler.

couple of years and he used to say, a beautiful gesture is a gesture that sounds right. And we need the sound at the moment to do that. That's my take on it. So we'll do video review if you want to call it that a couple of times a year, three times a year, but it's not a major part of things.²³⁰

On Friday afternoons the conductors meet for an unofficial session to discuss things such as score study techniques, upcoming repertoire, and other more general issues such as programming and the responsibilities of being a Music Director. Kiesler has also instigated a study program designed to enhance the students' general repertoire knowledge:

As part of the conducting program I started something many years ago called RAP, which stands for repertoire advancement programme. What that is is an opportunity for conductors to become more familiar in less depth with a great amount of repertoire, so that they're conversant with it when they're on the job ... and they have to become familiar with quite a few I would say. There are three or four pieces every week for the entire year and it's two years worth of list.²³¹

This broad survey gives students a thorough overview of the standard repertoire by the end of their period of study. It puts them in a position to be able to make informed programming choices in their later careers, and also increases their knowledge of the musical language and styles adopted by the established composers of the canon.

Kiesler gives around ten to twelve private lessons to his students over the course of the academic year. These sessions can be used to watch and analyse videos, talk about career issues, technical issues, or whatever is deemed most beneficial to each student. Some of these lessons are literally one to one, but Kiesler often likes to have another student in the room, so they can 'spot' for the other student, and help each other with issues in the future. According to Kiesler, this is based on the idea of concert pianist and teacher Leon Fleisher, who refers to the concept as 'pairing', and regularly gives lessons to students in twos, with one simply observing the lesson. In this way, two people are gaining instruction, though from differing perspectives.²³²

²³⁰ Kiesler.

²³¹ Kiesler.

²³² Kiesler.

In addition to working with the ensemble in the conducting seminar, students have the opportunity to share a concert every year with each of the school's two music-major orchestras: the University Symphony Orchestra and the University Philharmonia Orchestra. Kiesler is also present through the rehearsal process and able to give guidance and tuition as appropriate. DMA students are heavily involved in the school's opera program, each generally receiving two or three opportunities to work as an assistant on a production. This involves conducting a large number of production rehearsals, conducting the sitzprobe and a full stage rehearsal, and at least one of the scheduled performances. Recent operas performed by the school have included *Falstaff*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Eugene Onegin* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Additionally, DMA students act as Music Directors for the University's two non-music major orchestras, with Masters students acting as their assistants. As well as giving valuable extra podium time with a full orchestra, students also benefit from the experience of having to run the orchestra, dealing with organisational issues as well as musical ones.

- **Graduation**

Masters students are required to present a recital at the end of their degree. Much like the Peabody Conservatory, no orchestra or ensemble is provided by the school for these recitals, and students ordinarily form their own groups from the student body. A common practice adopted by students is to work in pairs, gathering an orchestra, and then sharing a full concert performance.²³³ The process involved for DMA students is more rigorous. Doctoral students are required to do three recitals, performing programs that must be approved by a committee. Some of these recitals may be with an orchestra or ensemble organised by the student, but at least one will ordinarily be with an official school ensemble. Opera performances are often used for this purpose, and students can also nominate a performance with an external orchestra to be one of their recitals. Each performance must

²³³ Kiesler.

be accompanied by a scholarly program, and students must also present a pre-concert lecture. Before sitting for these final recitals, students are required to demonstrate that they have good diction skills in French, German and Italian, as well as having passed examinations in music theory and music history.

- **The pedagogical approach of Kenneth Kiesler**

Over the course of his eighteen year tenure at the University of Michigan, Kiesler has developed clear stances on many issues relating to conducting pedagogy. One issue he finds of particular importance is the relationship between conductor and orchestra, which he believes must be based on mutual understanding and empathy. He highlights one of the fundamental problems he often sees in this relationship:

So many of the disconnects that we have in the relationship between a conductor and an orchestra are caused because the conductor has a technique that's communicating the opposite of what they really want, or at least, is not successfully communicating what they want. So they're giving mixed signals, one verbally and one technically.²³⁴

Orchestras are trained and expected to follow and read the conductor's intentions through their body language at all times. Clearly, if one message is being given physically and another verbally, this will result in frustration and confusion for both orchestra and conductor. In terms of purely technical issues, Kiesler has some principles he likes his students to adhere to in order to make themselves clear:

I think there are certain common threads. Technically, for example, smaller is not softer and larger is not louder. Smaller is faster and larger is slower. What do you do if you're conducting an accelerando that has a crescendo? If you get larger and larger for the crescendo, which some people teach, it counteracts the accelerando. You cannot get faster by getting larger. You can carry this through into other aspects, not just accelerandi or ritardandi, but let's say into rubato or subdivisions. If a conductor subdivides not proportionately – too large in other words – the orchestra drags, and the conductor says why are you dragging and then there's this disconnect.²³⁵

²³⁴ Kiesler.

²³⁵ Kiesler.

This is an interesting point that is not often made. Equating the size of conducting with volume of sound is a common principle taught by many teachers. Of course, there can be situations where 'small is softer' and 'large is louder'. However, Kiesler correctly underlines that tempo is often a more important consideration in relation to the size of conducting. Using gestures that are too large in a fast tempo can easily lead to a situation where the conductor feels the orchestra is dragging. Similarly, when subdividing, beats that are too large can result in a tempo that is slower than desired. 'Larger is louder' is therefore not a principle that can be relied upon in all scenarios.

Whilst Kiesler has detailed technical principles he asks his students to abide by, these act merely as a foundation for a conductor's musical persona on the podium. A large part of his work involves encouraging students to go beyond technical rules and principles:

Many conductors communicate only the metre, the tempo and the dynamic, with a few cues here and there... we're looking for something that includes really showing and feeling and communicating the sound. If you're not addressing the sound you can't influence the sound. So engaging with the sound and with the line of the music and the weight and the density and the colour of the music.²³⁶

Engaging with the sound is a common concept in advanced conducting pedagogy, with many of the pedagogues interviewed for this study expressing similar views.²³⁷ Kiesler, however, goes further than most in the area of developing the expressivity of a student's conducting:

We're not [just] giving signals as to how to play, we're experiencing [the music] in such a way, before the orchestra does, and inviting them to join us in that experience... Look at Giulini for example. Not much technique, in fact he was maddening to orchestras that way, but there was a trust of the players and an ability to experience what the music meant and everybody wanted to be with him and do what he wanted... it's the same with Simon Rattle or Abbado, for example... really being present and being affected by the music.²³⁸

²³⁶ Kiesler.

²³⁷ See Section 1.2.

²³⁸ Kiesler.

As discussed in Part One, Kiesler has some specific exercises he uses to encourage students to 'experience the music'.²³⁹ This includes Kiesler improvising at the piano, encouraging students to illicit an emotional response through gesture. He also works in this area with a colleague at the University of Michigan, acting and movement teacher, Jerry Schwiebert. As well as working together in Ann Arbor, Schwiebert and Kiesler collaborate at the Medomak Conducting Summer School, a three week intensive program run by Kiesler. Kiesler comments on what Schwiebert's role working with conductors:

He works on the idea of our being available to be expressive and ridding tension. So if your joints are available to move, you can be expressive, if they're locked you can't be expressive. So we work from the body, but we also work from the mind and the spirit because you have to give up something before you can gain this ability to receive the music and be affected by it. You have to give up many things. And that's difficult for some people to get in front of an orchestra and on demand, call forth vulnerability, resonance with the music and that's what we hope to teach and practice.²⁴⁰

As Kiesler points out, the genuine expression of emotions in front of a large group of people can be a real challenge for some people. Indeed, it could be argued that society conditions us to limit overt displays of emotion in a public setting. Kiesler works to unlock the potential of students in this area, and overcome any inbuilt inhibitions. Schwiebert has recently published a book detailing his approach and his experiences teaching movement and expression to performers.²⁴¹ He declares one of his largest influences to be the work of Russian acting teacher Konstantin Stanislavsky. Interestingly, Musin also regarded Stanislavsky as an important influence in his approach, recommending to his students that they read his works.²⁴² Parallels in approaches therefore can be drawn between two schools which at first glance may seem at opposite ends of the spectrum.

²³⁹ See Section 1.4.

²⁴⁰ Kiesler.

²⁴¹ See Section 3.2.

Ultimately, Kiesler believes his primary role is to give students the skills and self-awareness they need to continue to grow in the future. This derives from the views of his own mentor, Italian Maestro, Carlo Maria Giulini:

Giulini's idea was that the great conductors are the ones who are appropriately self-critical and self-analytical. And they understand what went wrong that can be done better the next time, and you learn from your experience, and what I'm trying to do is give students the tools so that they can be self-analytical, they know what's working and what isn't and how to prescribe a solution for themselves and for the orchestra. So that they can build on this foundation. Somebody comes here for two or three years, out of a thirty, forty, fifty year career. So this is just the beginning of a very long trajectory and they're going to learn way more when they leave here than they are during. I just want them to have the right tools to get started and to understand themselves as they grow.²⁴³

The concept of giving students the tools for self-analysis has much in common with the ethos of Jorma Panula, though there are significant different differences in the way they go about achieving this. Panula places a large emphasis on using video as an analytical tool, while Kiesler takes a far more holistic approach to the teaching of conducting. What they have in common, however, is providing students with an environment where they live and breathe music and conducting every day of their studies. Thus, students graduate with a well-rounded, broad education, ready to venture into the profession.

- **Summary**

The University of Michigan's program is notable for its focus and highly integrated structure, giving students an immersive experience. As well as taking charge of the practical conducting activities undertaken in Conducting Seminar and elsewhere, Kiesler has clearly worked to ensure that all subjects studied by students are contributing directly to their education as conductors, rather than merely serving as ways to earn points in order to qualify for a degree. Score preparation and the development of the underlying skills required for this activity are dealt with to an extent not seen elsewhere in this study. It is the only

²⁴³ Kiesler.

school examined to offer one-to-one aural training, thus providing a course that is not only designed for conductors in general, but for the individual students themselves.

The University of Michigan does not have a preparatory ensemble and fixed-size lab orchestra, but instead blurs the line between the two by taking a flexible approach to the ensemble present at the Conducting Seminar, where the majority of practical instruction takes place. In addition to the time spent conducting in the seminar, students are very much integrated in to the general music-making activities of the school, with DMA students in particular enjoying a generous amount of time conducting school ensembles. This is surely only possible due to the high level of such students, who are able to operate in a capacity that many other schools would reserve for a member of staff.

In terms of the teaching of the physical aspects of conducting, Kiesler's work is of great interest, as he explores areas beyond those that may be considered traditional. In particular, his work in relation to the expression of emotions through conducting is of great interest, and worthy of further investigation. The combination of these new ideas with a strong emphasis on traditional musical fundamentals is undoubtedly a strong one, and is the primary reason for the school's success in recent years.

Part Three: Deductions and recommendations

3.1 Comparisons and Deductions

3.2 Additional areas of pedagogical focus

3.3 Recommendations for a tertiary conducting program: a proposed curriculum

Part Three draws together the information presented thus far. Section 3.1 presents comparisons and deductions arrived at through a critical evaluation of the information presented in Part Two, and addresses the issue of what can currently be considered best practice in conductor training at the tertiary level. Section 3.2 then looks to the future of conducting pedagogy and identifies areas under-represented in the seven institutions surveyed; namely, body movement, psychology, and exposure to chamber music ensembles. Section 3.3 presents a hypothetical course structure for a future tertiary level conducting program, one that synthesises and builds upon current best practice. This course proposal represents the culmination of the research undertaken in the current study.

3.1 Comparisons and deductions

Having surveyed the activities of seven of the world's leading tertiary institutions for conductor training, it is now possible to suggest what constitutes best practice in conductor training at the present time. The following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Leading institutions provide students with an orchestra to work with in addition to a preparatory ensemble.
2. A thorough and rigorous entrance examination is required in order to select the students best suited to the program.
3. Teaching is given in groups so as to maximise the learning experience and the resources provided.
4. Leading schools have a high degree of continuity in their conducting faculty.
5. The conducting program is in most cases the primary focus of the conducting professor.
6. A class size of between seven and twelve is generally considered to be standard for a one-teacher system.
7. An overall period of five years of studies is generally considered to be appropriate.
8. The broader curriculum should support the activities of the conducting class, and be as integrated as possible.
9. Strong links should be developed with the local musical community, with final examinations ideally being presented with an external professional ensemble.

1) Orchestras and ensembles

All schools examined in this study provide their students with an orchestra to work with as part of their studies. This can be viewed as an absolute necessity for any conducting program.

The most common approach to sourcing an orchestra is to pay students or recent graduates an honorarium to play in the resident orchestra of the conducting class. This is the solution taken by the Sibelius Academy, Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts, Peabody Conservatory, University of Michigan and the Juilliard School.

The Zürich University of Arts takes a different approach, choosing to work with a range of orchestras for short and focused periods, rather than having any form of resident ensemble. This has the advantage of providing students with an environment that in some ways is closer to a real professional experience, in that they are often working with different, established groups of musicians. Thus, the conductor-orchestra relationship never suffers from overfamiliarity. The St. Petersburg Conservatory has the remarkable luxury of a professional orchestra in residence that exists primarily for the purpose of training conductors. This is an ideal solution, but is prohibitively expensive in most parts of the world due to the unionisation of the workforce. Hence the need to find some form of compromise elsewhere.

Given that time working with an orchestra is relatively sparse, all institutions studied have some form of preparatory ensemble with which to work, allowing them to deal with preliminary issues before encountering the orchestra. Since the beginning of conductor training, working with two pianos has been a well-accepted practice, and it is therefore no surprise to find this formation used amongst the schools studied. Interestingly, however, the schools working with two pianos regularly (Vienna, St. Petersburg and Juilliard) are in the minority. All other schools work with some form of small ensemble, normally of between five and ten players. The two piano option is clearly the most affordable, and as a result, more time may be available to work with this formation. However, the quality of the pianists

playing the pianos has a significant impact on the effectiveness of this solution, and some teachers feel the quality of sound produced is too far removed from that which is produced by an orchestra, as discussed in detail in Section 1.3. The addition of a small number of string and wind instrumentalists can greatly increase the quality of experience for the student, but it comes at increased cost to the school. However, three of the schools investigated feel this is a worthwhile investment.

2) Audition procedures

The audition procedures for the schools selected are in general very similar. Thus, a standard practice can be considered to have been established in this area. Potential students are required to undergo rigorous procedures examining many aspects of their musical makeup, with these tests in some cases being spread over several days.

The most in depth procedure encountered in this study occurs at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts. This is perhaps not surprising, as they are the only institution investigated to invite all applicants to audition in person, and therefore require more time to arrive at a final selection for admission. The most straightforward process encountered was that of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, where the primary emphasis is placed on the conducting exam, rather than areas of theoretical knowledge or aural skills. This is very much in keeping with the school's overall approach of focusing on practical rather than theoretical issues.

At all seven schools, the audition procedures can be considered more arduous than those facing an instrumentalist. This is a reflection of the high monetary cost of each place in the conducting program, due to the presence of the orchestra, and relatively low student numbers compared to other areas. With the schools making a significant financial investment in their conducting programs, it is natural that there follows an expectation of successful outcomes for the program. Clearly, the importance of this initial selection of students cannot be overestimated, hence the thorough audition procedures encountered.

3) Group classes and repertoire structure

The primary method of delivering conducting tuition observed in this study has involved students studying together in a class setting. This is in contrast to the one-to-one tuition traditionally offered to instrumentalists. Given the need for an ensemble or orchestra to conduct, it is logical to gather students around the presence of this precious resource. All of the schools investigated follow this path, with one notable exception.

At the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg Conservatory State Conservatory of Music, lessons with two pianos are officially classified as individual lessons. In practice, most teachers insist that all their students be present for these sessions, as was the practice of the father-figure of the school, Ilya Musin. Thus, the more common group class atmosphere is created. However, this structure has allowed students to have their own individual repertoire plan, designed for their specific needs by the teacher. This allows an organic, tailored development for each student, and avoids the problem of beginning students being faced with advanced repertoire too soon. The other factor that makes this possible in St. Petersburg is the fact that the pianists and orchestra with which the students work are professional, and work regularly for the conducting class. Hence, they are familiar with the core orchestral repertoire, and switching repertoire with every student does not present a problem. This is in contrast to an orchestra based on students (even if they are being paid), where the lack of familiarity with a wide-ranging repertoire can present a problem. There are positives and negatives to the St. Petersburg approach. Students can develop at their own pace, and are constantly being exposed to a broader repertoire in the form of the works studied by their peers. However, they will arguably learn less from watching their fellow students conducting repertoire they themselves are not intimately familiar with. All other schools investigated schedule repertoire for the entire student group, and accept the fact that beginning students may occasionally be challenged by difficult repertoire at an early stage of their development.

4) Continuity of the faculty

A common feature amongst the conducting professors of these leading schools is the long duration of their tenures, with many having been in their current positions for more than fifteen years. As a result, many schools can point to extended periods of 30 years or more, during which time only two people have been responsible for leading the conducting program. This gives the schools continuity and stability, and allows them to develop a reputation on the international stage. An excellent reputation in turn leads to interest from potential students, ensuring the best institutions attract the best students. However, such a reputation takes time to develop, and the reputation of the teacher is in most instances just as important as that of the institution itself.

5) Career teachers

The majority of the conducting professors teaching at the selected schools are career teachers, rather than career conductors. This is not to say that they no longer engage in professional conducting activities themselves, but are known primarily as teachers, and spend a significant portion of their working life engaged in educating young conductors. This trend is exemplified by the examples of Ilya Musin and Jorma Panula, arguably the two leading conducting pedagogues of the twentieth century. Both are famous for the quality of their pupils, rather than their own activities on the podium. It seems that in the day and age of the 'jet-set' conductor, leading practicing conductors are not in the same location for long enough periods of time to be able to consider taking on the commitment of leading a university conducting program. The two notable exceptions amongst the schools investigated are Alan Gilbert of the Juilliard School and Leif Segerstam of the Sibelius Academy. Both Gilbert and Segerstam reside in the same city as their respective schools, and both also have strong relationships with the local orchestra, Gilbert being Music Director of the New York Philharmonic, and Segerstam being Chief Conductor Emeritus of the Helsinki Philharmonic (having been Chief Conductor for most of his tenure at the Sibelius

Academy). This gives both men an added reason to be in residence more than they might be otherwise. Gilbert also benefits from having a co-teacher in James Ross, who can give extra stability to the program, whilst the Sibelius Academy has regular high quality guest teachers, as well as having had an assistant professor in Atso Almila.

6) Student numbers

How many students to have at any one time is a key decision for any school offering a conducting program. The greater the number of students, the more resources such as the orchestra will have to be divided. Four of the schools investigated have between seven and twelve students in the conducting class at any one time, and this can be said to be the norm. However, there was significant variation in the remaining three schools.

The Juilliard School has the smallest class with only four students, whilst St. Petersburg has twenty students, and Vienna, approximately sixty. This makes a place at the Juilliard School highly desirable, as they will receive more personal attention, and have ample access to resources. For the school, it means they only need to provide one orchestra session per week for the conducting class in order to provide a good amount of podium time. Vienna takes the opposite approach, training students en masse. Inevitably, this means less orchestra time for students, though those in Mark Stringer's class still receive a good amount of personal lesson time. The advantage of this approach comes in the delivery of the broader curriculum, allowing many classes to be tailored specifically for the needs of conductors. A student body of seven to twelve, however, allows a balanced approach to be taken on these issues.

7) Level and length of study

It seems that around five years can be considered a normal period of study for a conducting student at a leading institution, which may involve taking more than one degree. The type of degree being offered obviously has a direct bearing on the length of study. A Bachelor of

Music degree is ordinarily three years in duration, a Master of Music degree two years, and a Doctor of Musical Arts three years. Five of the seven schools examined offer some combination of these degrees, though St Petersburg and Vienna do not adhere to this system, and instead offer a five year degree which can be said to be equivalent to a Bachelor plus Masters.¹ The Zürich University of Arts has the greatest degree of flexibility in this area, offering a Bachelor of Music degree plus two different Masters degrees. A student then has the option of studying for two, four, five or seven years. In the United States, both Peabody and Michigan offer Masters and DMA degrees, whilst Juilliard only offers a Masters, but with the possibility of a one year extension to make it a three year degree. The flexibility of Zürich's approach is attractive, as it gives a variety of options, whereby a student can tailor the length and depth of studies to their own specific requirements.

8) The broader curriculum

In Vienna, the large number of conducting students means it is possible to have a broad curriculum, much of which has been designed specifically for conductors. As such, it should come as no surprise that Vienna offers students the most thorough course of academic study for conductors encountered in this study. Any graduate from the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts can be expected to have a thorough knowledge of music history and theory, advanced analytic skills, well-developed aural and score reading skills, and symphonic and operatic repertoires. What they may lack is meaningful experience interacting with a symphony orchestra.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Sibelius Academy and Peabody Conservatory programs are focused on the act of conducting in front of an orchestra. Whilst students are required to take other subjects, these are all aimed at the general student body, are not at all

¹ Though Austria and Russia are both signatories to the Bologna process, whereby all signatories are required to adopt a Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate structure, the Vienna University of Arts is not required to adopt this structure under the terms of the process and currently has no plans to change its current structure. The situation regarding the adoption of the Bologna Process in Russia is very unclear at the time of writing, and it seems unlikely changes will be made in the foreseeable future.

specialised, and essentially are taken to fulfil the requirements of the degree, rather than supporting the conducting tuition itself. Juilliard is more aware of what subjects their students are engaging in outside the conducting studio, whilst Michigan, Zürich and St Petersburg all have well thought out, integrated curricula.

It may be argued that a student's abilities in many of these non-practical areas can be assessed in the audition, and that only students who are well developed in these areas are admitted to the program. However, what has been observed in this study is that, in fact, the institutions which integrate and place an emphasis on these non-practical aspects during studies, also put a high level of emphasis on these aspects during the audition process. Certainly, it is the opinion of this author that no matter what a student's level of competence may be in areas such as aural skills and theoretical knowledge, these areas should continue to be developed.

9) Links with the community

The majority of schools studied have meaningful connections with orchestras outside of the confines of the school. The Zürich University of Arts in particular, has a strong network of connections within the Swiss musical community and beyond. The school relies heavily on these links to provide their students with opportunities to conduct an orchestra, having only a small ensemble in residence at the school. The Sibelius Academy also demonstrates strong links with other musical institutions in Finland, in particular with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, which has a regular master class arrangement with the Academy, and the network of regional orchestras spread throughout the country. In the United States, the Juilliard School has an enviable relationship with the New York Philharmonic, largely based on the fact that the course director, Alan Gilbert, is the Music Director of the Philharmonic. This gives students a window into how the profession operates at the highest level. The Peabody Conservatory also has a meaningful relationship with its local orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony. Marin Alsop, the Music Director of the orchestra, and a former pupil of

Peabody course director Gustav Meier at Tanglewood, takes a keen interest in the students of the program, and the orchestra provides students with a master class opportunity at least once a year. Additionally, the school and orchestra collaborate by offering the BSO-Peabody Conducting Fellowship.

All of these links provide students with a bridge to the profession itself, and may open further pathways when they come to the end of their studies. They have the added benefit of providing a reference point for students, providing a reminder as to what will be expected of them when they leave the sheltered environment of the music school, and attempt to enter the profession.

3.2 Additional areas of pedagogical focus

Having established nine points which can be considered current best practice, this section identifies and details three additional areas of conductor training that have been only partially engaged with, or neglected completely, in the institutions surveyed in this study. Several areas have been observed during the undertaking of this study that require better understanding on the part of conducting pedagogy as a whole. Most of these areas can be placed in one of two categories – relating to either approaches to body movement, or issues of psychology, particularly in terms of engaging and motivating a large group of musicians. A third consideration is the possible benefit to students of orchestral conducting being required to participate in chamber music programs. This is a resource already in existence at most music schools, but remains untapped as far as conductor training is concerned.

- **Body movement**

In performance, the conductor's sole means of communicating their wishes and feelings to the orchestra is the body. How the conductor's body functions and operates will inevitably influence the effectiveness of this communication. Gunther Schuller states:

We are in a profound and virtually inescapable sense prisoners of our bodies. Almost all of us have some more or less serious limitations as to what we can do with our hands, our arms, our shoulders, our head, our eyes—in short our body equipment.²

By the time a musician decides they wish to conduct, their bodies have inevitably developed certain habitual ways of moving, and perhaps, areas of habitual muscular tension, which may manifest themselves as limitations of the sort to which Schuller refers. Traditionally, conductor training has taken a limited interest in the way the body functions as a whole, focusing almost entirely on the upper body, and in particular, the hands and arms. Many conducting manuals deal with how the fingers, wrists, elbows and shoulders should remain relaxed, and how they should work together to function effectively. Regarding the rest of the body, the instruction given to students is usually to keep still, and for the feet to be grounded, with as few extraneous movements as possible. This focus on the upper limbs is natural in many ways, as the hands (in combination with the eyes) are the primary tools for communicating with the orchestra. However, developments in the understanding of human physiology reveal the complexity of the functioning of the human body, and in particular, that no part of our body functions in isolation – it is always part of an interconnected whole. Given this, the traditional focus of conducting pedagogy on the functioning of the upper limbs alone seems somewhat dated, and the instruction to keep the rest of the body still, can in fact be counterproductive and lead to other problems. James Ross of the Juilliard School is one teacher who is engaging with the functioning of the body in a broader context. According to Ross:

² Gunther Schuller, *The Compleat Conductor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9.

The topic of conducting with more of ourselves than from the shoulder outward is hugely crucial... Even just the idea of what an arm is and that it doesn't stop at the shoulder but includes the shoulder blade, shoulder girdle, which links to the chest bone. That idea alone has been known to help conductors feel more completely from where they are conducting, where the impulses spark and generate outward.³

Even this relatively small step of understanding how the arms are integrated with the body can be of benefit to some students.

Dr Bronwen Ackermann is a physiotherapist of international repute who works exclusively with musicians, both as a practitioner and a researcher. In February 2012, she worked with advanced orchestral conducting students as part of a master class presented by Symphony Australia, with which the present author was involved. A world leading expert in her field, her observations on the way conductors use their bodies was of great interest, and her comments led to immediate benefits for several students who struggled with particular physical issues. She expressed her surprise that many of the concepts she was talking about were new, not only for the students, but for the conducting teachers as well:

It's astounding to me that you don't cover this in conducting school, because you are your instrument. How you time your body movements – it's your communication tool. Standing still and making a gesture won't communicate passion, you've got to really communicate it with body language.⁴

Much of her work involved removing physical impediments so that the body was free to move fluently and easily. A particular focus involved trying to reconnect people with the bottom half of their body:

A lot of people have been told to stand still and then they're disconnected from the waist down. Our hips are great rotators. It's really important not to be blocking that.⁵

³ James Ross, interview by author, New York, 20 January 2012.

⁴ Bronwen Ackermann, interview by author, Sydney, 27 December 2012.

⁵ Ackermann.

Ackermann does not necessarily advocate that conductors should be moving their legs, but rather, be free to shift weight between them. She points out the benefits of efficient weight transferal for movement:

You're standing on these four different parts of the feet and if you use them, your whole body moves much more quickly and precisely. Making sure your movements come from the centre outwards is even more important than being strong.⁶

According to Ackermann, even the footwear that a conductor wears should be considered in this context, and should be 'soft and balanced', with the traditional flat dress shoes that are often worn by conductors for performances not being conducive to weight shifting effectively. Other issues that were examined included unnecessary tension in the shoulders of many conductors, and avoiding tension in the hands, thus allowing precise control of the baton through the fingers. Even breath control was a topic for discussion, something rarely discussed in conductor training:

Even if you have time to breathe, you need to remember to breathe – oxygen supplies your muscles. There were lots of breath holders on this course. This is a particular danger if you are stressed. Breathing exercises are something you should all be doing.⁷

A lack of oxygen may also effect the mental state of a conductor, leading to problems such as being unable to listen analytically, a problem that was raised by several experts in Section 1.7. This is a simple problem with a simple solution, but one that may have significant consequences for a student if not diagnosed and addressed.

If conducting pedagogy is able to come to a better understanding of how the human body functions as a whole, students will be less likely to encounter unwanted muscular tension, less likely to encounter injuries later in life, and may be able to increase the power and effectiveness of their communication through gesture. It is important to underline that these insights of Ackermann do not represent a contradiction of traditional approaches

⁶ Ackermann.

⁷ Ackermann.

currently taken in conducting pedagogy, but rather, have the potential to supplement and give added depth to current approaches, and to give us a better understanding of how the body as whole should function in order to operate efficiently and effectively while conducting. Such an approach does not prohibit the body remaining focused, and still allows for the omission of extraneous movements that may be distracting to the orchestra. Of course, muscular tension will sometimes be required, but if we can attain a neutral state where the body is relaxed, flowing and controlled, tension can then be added as demanded by the content of the music being performed.

As discussed in Section 1.4, Kenneth Kiesler believes the body itself plays an important role in the communication of emotions. He works closely with acting and performance coach Jerald Schwiebert, who is also a faculty member of the School of Music, Theatre and Dance at the University of Michigan. Much of Schwiebert's work with actors, conductors, and other musicians revolves around gaining a deeper understanding of how the body functions. He describes his book as 'a primer for expanding your capacity for physical expression', and also underlines the importance of getting rid of unnecessary physical tension.⁸ Some might regard these ideas of working with movement specialists or actors as being too 'new age' or experimental, and not in the tradition of the great conducting pedagogues. Interestingly, Ilya Musin, one of the great pedagogues of the 20th century, and one whom most would regard as 'old school', was ahead of his time in this area. In his book, *The Technique of Conducting*, he writes:

The conductor should be familiar with the writings of K. S. Stanislavsky. In them, he can gain a numerous thoughts, which are directly or indirectly related to his own artistic skills.⁹

Stanislavsky was Russia's leading acting teacher in the early 20th century, and his method is still widely used internationally today. Evidently, his writings played an important part in

⁸ Jerald Schwiebert, *Physical Expression and the Performing Artist* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), viii.

⁹ Ilya Musin, *Tehnika Dirijirovaniya* [The Technique of Conducting] (St. Petersburg: Dean-Adia-M, 1995), 509. Transl. Oleg Proskurnya.

Musin's formulation of his own method for conducting, as he refers to Stanislavsky on several occasions in his writings. He also speaks of the danger of excess physical tension in relation to expressive conducting:

Excessive physical efforts, in general, restrain movements and deprive them of their elasticity, mobility and, what is most important, expressiveness. (It was not incidental that K. S. Stanislavsky paid much attention to the relaxation of an actor's muscles).¹⁰

The idea of attaining a deeper understanding how our bodies function in relation to conducting is not completely new. Various works have been written arguing that conductor training should include concepts from movement theories such as Alexander Technique, Dalcroze, Feldenkrais and Laban Movement Analysis.¹¹ Some teachers may find one of these methods helpful, and compatible to their own particular approach to the physical aspects of conducting. However, if relied upon too heavily, there may be a danger of the movement theory imposing itself on a conductor's technique, and potentially get in the way of a student developing their own personal approach.

It is this author's contention that the field of conducting pedagogy (and at all levels) should be more aware of how the body functions as a whole, and the interconnectedness of its different parts. This need not be based on approaches that some might consider 'alternative', but can in fact be based on scientific research in the area of biomechanics and functional anatomy. Of course, whatever new paths we may find to enhance our understanding of communication through movement, should merely supplement, and not distract us from, other crucial areas of importance in conductor training, such as general musicianship, and knowledge of the score itself and the composers who wrote them. No amount of physical facility or visual elegance can substitute a fully formed and well-articulated musical vision of the composer's intentions. The science of bio-mechanics is relatively new, and to date, most research has been focused on applications in sport. There

¹⁰ Musin, 132.

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of works written in this area, see: Andrew Mathers, *How theories of expressive movement and non-verbal communication can enhance expressive conducting at all levels of entering behaviour* (PhD thesis, Monash University, 2008).

is much potential for new research into the mechanical workings of the conductor's body, that may lead to the ability to unlock communicative possibilities for conducting students of the future. This is something that conducting pedagogy should actively pursue.

- **Psychology**

As discussed in the case study of the Juilliard School, the nature of the relationship between conductors and orchestras has changed significantly over the course of the last fifty years, the conductor as tyrant no longer being an acceptable model. Whilst conductors once had the power to 'hire and fire', in today's orchestral world much of this power has been transferred to the players themselves. In the twenty-first century, orchestral players have significant input into which conductors they wish to work with, and in most cases are able to choose who their principal conductor will be. Thus, the conductor can no longer issue commands, expecting them to be obeyed merely on the basis of the authority of the position. Today's conductor is instead a leader amongst musicians, and must earn the respect of the members of the orchestra in order to function as an effective leader. This respect can be earned in many ways, not least of all through first-class musicianship and a thorough knowledge of the work being performed. However, even the best musicians must know how to work and interact with other people, in order to get the best out of the collective of human beings that is the symphony orchestra. As the world renowned French conductor Charles Munch once said, 'Think for a moment of what it would mean to a pianist if by some miracle every key of his instrument should suddenly become a living thing.'¹²

Even though engaging and working with people effectively is such a fundamental part of the conductor's role, students of conducting generally receive little or no assistance in this area. On occasion, students may receive feedback on their interaction with musicians during their lessons with orchestra. However, as has been demonstrated in Part Two, this time with

¹² Charles Munch, *I Am a Conductor* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), 7. Originally published as Charles Munch, *Je Suis Chef D'Orchestre* (Paris: Éditions du Conquistador, 1954).

orchestra is relatively sparse, and musical and physical issues must also be dealt with. Indeed, several professors interviewed for this study indicated that they felt they did not have enough time to deal with approaches to rehearsing in a meaningful way, and that this was a weakness of their programs. Little time is available to directly address the psychological aspects of working with a group of musicians whilst the student is standing on the podium. Such issues may be discussed more freely in a video review session, but of the seven schools investigated, only the Sibelius Academy has such sessions on a regular basis, with other institutions either having them only occasionally as required, or not at all.

Given the lack of opportunities to deal with these challenges in a practical session, it seems logical that issues such as group psychology and leadership skills should be engaged with on a theoretical level in a classroom setting. A large body of research exists on the subject of group psychology and leadership, with some relating directly to the orchestral environment.¹³ Arming students with this theoretical information would give them a basis and a context for their own experiences and behaviours whilst conducting, and also when they are observing other conductors rehearsing, either in the classroom or in the professional world. However, most schools in this study do not attempt to engage with such issues outside of the conducting class itself. One exception is the Juilliard School, which has a seminar once a week for the discussion of general issues. James Ross provides his students with a varied and eclectic reading list that serves as a catalyst for discussion, and texts on leadership feature prominently on this list. This engagement could be taken further, with experts in this area being invited into the school to discuss these issues with the students, and observe them working with an orchestra. This need not be a regular activity, however it is vital that students are made aware that these are issues they need to be thinking about, and may need to develop over the course of their studies and their future careers.

¹³ Harry E. Price and James L. Byo, 'Rehearsing and Conducting', in Richard Parncutt and Gary E. McPherson (eds.), *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 336.

The area of leadership is perhaps only rarely engaged with as it is considered to be one of the parts of the conductor's job that cannot be taught. One often hears the term 'a born leader', just as we hear of 'a born conductor'. Yet leadership skills have been taught in the business world for many years. Whilst a particular student may indeed be 'a born leader', it is likely that we can assist other less gifted students in this area to maximise their potential. A quality often connected with leadership is charisma. Again, this is something that people are considered to be born with. In her book, *The Charisma Myth*, Olivia Fox Cabane draws on a range of research conducted in this area, and makes the case that charisma can be learnt. According to Cabane:

One of the reasons charisma is mistakenly held to be innate is that, like many other social skills, charismatic behaviours are generally learned early in life. In fact, people usually don't consciously realize they are learning them. They're just trying new behaviours, seeing the results, and refining them. Eventually, the behaviours become instinctive. Countless well-known charismatic figures worked hard to gain their charisma, increasing it step by step.¹⁴

Whilst no one would claim that it is possible to teach someone to have the charisma of a Bernstein or a Karajan, it is possible to teach people behavioural habits that may increase the chance that an orchestra will accept them as an authority figure. On a very basic level, things such as making regular eye contact with musicians, adopting positive body language when giving rehearsal instructions, speaking clearly and concisely, can all help in making a positive impression with an orchestra. If these things are combined with a thorough knowledge of the score and a clear love for the music, it is likely that the orchestra will engage willingly with the conductor.

The approaches proposed thus far in this chapter are based on relatively new research in fields other than music. Fields such as bio-mechanics, the understanding of what makes an effective leader, and the exploration of what exactly charisma is, are all areas that will continue to evolve over the coming years. Conducting pedagogy as a whole should take a keen interest in these areas of research and where appropriate, absorb the lessons that can

¹⁴ Olivia Fox Cabane, *The Charisma Myth*, (New York: Penguin, 2012), 4.

be learnt so as to better understand our own profession. Indeed, it could be argued that the environment of the conducting class is uniquely placed to act as a laboratory for further research into issues relating to group psychology. It is a closed circuit in which the conductor and orchestra are continuously interacting. This engagement can be subjected to direct analysis through video, and through surveys and interviews following rehearsals. The conducting class also provides the opportunity to examine the workings of different conductors with the same orchestra and music in quick succession. Perhaps we could do worse than to offer ourselves as guinea pigs to our colleagues in the behavioural sciences.

- **Exposure to tertiary chamber music programs**

None of the conducting programs examined have a requirement for students to play chamber music.¹⁵ However, this is an activity that students of conducting could benefit from on several levels. Mark Stringer of the Vienna University of Music and Arts was one interviewee who pointed to this oversight:

I wish they had more chamber music here... for all the piano playing they do, I wish it was a requirement for them to play in piano quartets, where they watch string players as a pianist, they watch string players tune chords and figure out balances... learning how to actively lead, but at the same time actively listen. Shaping collaboratively a piece, but fighting to make a structure in rehearsal by negotiation.¹⁶

The Vienna program expects students to have well-developed keyboard skills, hence Stringer's reference to piano quartets. As Stringer points out, conducting students whose primary instrument is the piano, would have much to gain from such an activity, and could learn a great deal about string playing and the way an ensemble interacts, both physically and verbally. Listening skills can also be further developed through chamber music, and in particular the ability to play and listen at the same time. Perhaps most importantly, chamber

¹⁵ Though Michigan requires them to play in an ensemble, this is ordinarily an orchestra or choir.

¹⁶ Mark Stringer, interview by author, Vienna, 18 October 2011.

music ensembles are continuously grappling with the issue of how best to rehearse – when to play things through, when to stop and take things apart, as well as broader issues such as time management. Though the psychology of working in a small group is significantly different from that of conducting an orchestra, students would still be learning about how to deal with other musicians in a sensitive and appropriate manner, whilst making a constructive contribution to the ensemble. All of these things would contribute to a conductor's background knowledge and experience when they come to rehearse with a full orchestra.

The most beneficial combinations might be mixed instrument ensembles, where players can effectively educate each other, passively or actively, about the particular problems and approaches associated with their particular instrument. An additional advantage to playing chamber music is that conductors would then continue to play their principal instrument whilst studying conducting, and hence continue to make music on a regular basis. Though there are only a finite number of hours in every working week, an hour of chamber music could be highly beneficial to all conductors (at low cost to the school), and hence could be considered a worthy inclusion for any orchestral conductor training program. This is not an area requiring further research, and could be quickly and easily integrated into most conducting programs. As such it is one of the numerous proposals included in the following hypothetical course outline.

- **Summary**

As has been demonstrated in this thesis, the field of conductor training has come a long way since its humble beginnings in the early twentieth century. No field of artistic endeavour, however, can afford to stand still, and it is important to take time to investigate potential new directions. Areas do exist where the field of conducting pedagogy can expand its horizons, and in particular, benefit from research and techniques adopted in other fields. Some of these 'frontiers' have been recognised by schools investigated, even if they have yet to

engage with them fully. However, conducting pedagogy as a whole remains largely unaware of potential future pathways. Whether these pathways are adopted will come down to the personal preferences of the individual teacher. Some of these new approaches may benefit students who have particular difficulties in a certain area, but may not be relevant to other students. Nevertheless, it is important that they be examined and given due consideration.

3.3 Recommendations for a tertiary conducting program: A proposed curriculum

Having examined current best practice in tertiary level conductor training and outlined potential new directions for conducting pedagogy, the present section proposes an ideal curriculum and course structure for a tertiary level orchestral conducting program. It represents a synthesis of key features of the seven schools investigated, thus providing a template based directly on best international practice.

Were this hypothetical program to be put into practice, certain elements would doubtless need to be modified for the specific circumstances of the school in which it was being offered. Such circumstances might include scheduling issues, broader curriculum issues or budgetary issues. Whilst an effort has been made to keep costs at a reasonable level, a high level orchestral conductor training program is necessarily expensive, primarily due to the need to provide the students an orchestra with which they can work on a regular basis. Should financial circumstances make this impossible, opportunities for the students to conduct may need to be sought within the school's regular orchestral and ensemble activities, though as discussed in Section 1.3, this is far from ideal for various reasons. However it is achieved, regular orchestral contact is without doubt a requirement for any serious conductor training program.

- **Level of study**

As discussed in Section 1.1, the English speaking world generally offers conducting as a major at the postgraduate level, whilst the rest of the world tends to offer programs at the undergraduate level, with the option of continuing to postgraduate studies. Part Two has demonstrated that successful schools have been founded upon both approaches, so it appears that in fact, this is not as important an issue as it may at first seem. Of greater interest is the length of study available to the student, and in this area, flexibility is key. The proposed course would offer the following three degree options:

- Bachelor of Music (Three years, double major)
- Master of Music (Two years)
- Doctor of Musical Arts (Three years)

This borrows largely from the structure adopted at Zürich University of Arts, where a Bachelor of Music option is offered as a double-major, with the student majoring in their primary instrument, as well as conducting. This is then followed by two postgraduate options, but unlike Zürich, a Masters degree and a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree are offered, as is common practice in the United States.

The expected standard duration of study for any given student would be five years. Two of the most established conducting programs in the world, Vienna and St Petersburg, offer five year programs, with the Sibelius Academy also offering a similar period of study. When one considers that most leading programs in the United States offer a two year Masters degree and three year DMA, five years of study can be considered standard best practice. This allows time for students not only to develop as conductors, but to learn a sufficient amount of repertoire to enter the profession. These five years could comprise a Bachelor degree plus Masters, or Masters plus DMA, whichever is more appropriate for the student. Of course, for particularly advanced students, a Bachelor or Masters degree alone may suffice. The proposed combination of degrees would therefore offer a great deal of flexibility,

and be able to cater for a wide range of students. In theory, a student could study for eight years under this model, but this would be actively discouraged, if not prohibited. After five years, other experiences should be encouraged, and a certain amount of turnover in the student group is important in order to allow opportunities for new students to enter.

The proposed course would in principle cater for eight students at any one time, but be expandable to ten when needed. It is inevitable that student numbers would fluctuate to a certain extent due to unforeseen circumstances, such as deferrals of study, or a student deciding to go part time. Given that most of the schools investigated in this study had between seven and twelve students at any one time, it seems this is generally considered an appropriate balance between educating a significant number of students, and the problem of limited time available with orchestra. The breakdown between the different degree programs might ideally be two Bachelor students (the Bachelor degree only being offered to exceptionally talented students), four Masters students (this most likely being the most popular degree), and two DMA students. This would be logical if we consider that the Masters degree would be the option that all students who were doing five years of study would undertake. Of course, in practice, the balance of these numbers could be expected to fluctuate to a certain degree.

- **The audition**

Two of the conducting professors interviewed (Markand Thakar and Johannes Schlaefli) pointed out the limitations of the audition process and its occasional fallibility.¹⁷

Nevertheless, some form of selection process is unavoidable, and given the importance of this initial selection, it seems reasonable to say that one cannot be too thorough at this point. Several of the schools investigated had highly detailed audition procedures, and any one of these could act as a model. For the purpose of this proposed course, the entrance procedure of the University of Michigan has been taken as a starting point.

¹⁷ See Section 1.2.

Applicants would initially be required to send or upload a video approximately ten minutes in duration to the school, along with a curriculum vitae. This video would include two contrasting pieces, and involve the students conducting an orchestra or ensemble. Should this not be possible a recording with two pianos would also be accepted, so as to allow newcomers to conducting studies the possibility of applying. Given the program would offer a Bachelor degree, this is a reasonable concession.

Around fifteen candidates would then be invited to audition in person. On the first day, all candidates would sit for a two hour written exam focused on the audition repertoire, and general questions relating to the orchestra, music history and theory. At the conclusion of this exam, candidates would be given the score for the test piece to be played in the following aural test, which would be given after a break of one hour. Much like the test given at the University of Michigan, candidates would be played a pre-recorded orchestral work that included errors requiring identification. Following the lunch break, all candidates would then have the opportunity to conduct a chamber orchestra for ten minutes each. Each potential student would then have a fifteen minute interview with the faculty, during which they would also be required to briefly play their primary instrument, demonstrating their general level of musicianship. Keyboard skills would also be assessed, and motivations for studying conducting would be investigated. At the end of this process, six candidates would be selected to continue to the second day.

Day two would take a much simpler form. The six selected candidates would be given twenty-five minutes each to work with a chamber orchestra (or full orchestra if available). As is the practice at the Zürich University of Arts, students would be required to conduct one rhythmically complex work straight through of approximately five minutes duration (for example an appropriately difficult Stravinsky excerpt), followed by twenty minutes working on one movement of a standard repertoire piece (perhaps a Beethoven Symphony), which they would be expected to rehearse in some detail. This rehearsal session could also be considered an opportunity for the conducting professor to interact with the students, in effect giving them a brief lesson. This practice has been observed at the Juilliard School, with

Kenneth Kiesler in Michigan also taking time to teach potential students where he deems it appropriate. In this way, the faculty have the opportunity to see how quickly the student can take on new information, and how they react to the pedagogical approach of the teacher. Finally, between one and three conductors would be invited to join the class, the exact number being determined by the places available at the time. A schedule for the two days would be as follows:

Day One

9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.	Written examination
12.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.	Aural examination
1.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.	Orchestra session (10 minutes per candidate)
5.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m.	Interviews (15 minutes per candidate)
9.30 p.m.	Announcement of six candidates progressing to Day Two

Day Two

10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.	Orchestra session (25 minutes per candidate)
2.00 p.m.	Announcement of final results

It should be noted that such a process is designed for a conducting program aiming for the highest possible level. If a brand new program were to be instigated, it may take some time to develop a reputation that would attract a significant number of students. This would also be dependent on the reputation of the teacher leading the course, and perhaps more importantly, the amount of podium time offered during the course itself.

- **Recruiting practices and accessibility to the conducting department**

As part of this proposal it is suggested that the conducting professor and DMA students jointly deliver the undergraduate non-major conducting courses. In some schools, such courses are considered optional and take the form of an elective subject, whilst in many

schools it may be compulsory for one semester, with a more advanced course also being offered as an elective. Certainly, there is a strong argument that all music students should study some conducting, as many will later teach, and at some point, may find themselves leading a student orchestra or ensemble. If done correctly, these non-major classes could be used to identify students with an aptitude for conducting amongst the general student body, and the most gifted of these students could then be encouraged to consider conducting as an option for their next stage of studies. Students already well known to the faculty could then be guided to the conducting program, thus introducing some known quantities into the audition process. This concept would have the added advantage of making sure that talented musicians realise that conducting could be an option for them at a relatively early stage in their learning. This is something that has been of concern to Jorma Panula,¹⁸ and is also an issue that has been pointed out by Jesse Rosen, current head of the League of American Orchestras.¹⁹ The idea behind giving the broader student base access to the conducting class is based on practices observed at the Sibelius Academy. There, an open class known as 'Hiekkalaatikoo' or 'the Sandpit class' is periodically offered, where any student can come and have a conducting lesson, most often taught by Atso Almila.²⁰ Students are required to bring their own instruments and together form an ensemble to conduct. As discussed in Section 1.1, the Sibelius Academy also offers a 'Nuorisokapuluokka', or 'Youth class', on some weekends, this class still being led by Panula himself despite having retired nearly twenty years ago. However it is achieved, creating pathways within a school to the conducting class is likely to have benefits for all concerned. Should DMA students be involved, this would also give them a first taste of conducting pedagogy from the other side of the baton.

¹⁸ See Section 2.2.

¹⁹ Jesse Rosen, 'Comment: Bridging the gap', *Symphony* (May/June 2002) <http://www.americanorchestras.org/exhibitor-information/archive/symphony-magazine/archive/older-issues/146-mayjune-2002/793-comment56.html> (accessed 10 June 2013).

²⁰ Atso Almila, interview by author, Helsinki, 21 October 2011.

- **The conducting class and ensembles to be conducted**

The proposed schedule for the conducting classes combines ideas observed at the Peabody Conservatory, Juilliard School, and the Sibelius Academy. The schedule below would take place ten weeks per semester:

Saturday	10.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.	Two pianos
Monday	5.00 p.m. - 7.00 p.m.	Orchestra
Tuesday	9.00 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.	Video review
	11.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.	Two pianos plus string quintet
Wednesday	10.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m.	Orchestra

The conductor's working week would effectively begin on a Saturday, with a three hour session with two professional pianists, with the students with appropriate keyboard skills, also playing at the piano from full score, giving eight hands at any one time, as practiced at the Juilliard School. With only two paid musicians present, the session could be used in a flexible manner to delve into issues relating to the repertoire set for the week. This session would not be videotaped by the school, but students would be free to record it for their own private review. This would be followed by a significant break, allowing students to digest the discussions from this session, before conducting the orchestra in a two hour session on Monday evening. A Monday evening rehearsal should present few scheduling problems for the orchestra musicians, and a two hour session (without a break) keeps things focused and efficient. The following morning, the class would review the previous evening's orchestral session in a dedicated video session. Time could also be given to discussion of general problems presented by the repertoire. After a short break, the class would reconvene with two pianists (ideally the same pianists employed for the Saturday session), plus a string quintet (ideally the principals from the orchestra). This session would give the students a chance to practice specific problems identified in the video session, and to experiment with

potential solutions with the small ensemble. Finally, the working week would conclude with another two hour orchestra session on Wednesday morning.

The proposed orchestra would consist of around twenty-five auditioned, regular players, and would be made up of advanced and recent students who would be paid an honorarium for their services. Depending on the structure of the school's ensemble program, it may also be possible to offer students course credits in addition to payment. Of course, a wealthy school, or one with a specific endowment to cover conducting tuition, may be able to afford a larger orchestra. However, the present proposal has been designed with the aim of keeping the overall budget of the course within a realistic scale, and it has been demonstrated at the Sibelius Academy that an orchestra of this size can serve as an excellent instrument, provided that the standard of playing is high enough. The orchestra would have a string size of 4.3.3.2.1,²¹ with double winds (eight players), three brass players, and one percussionist. The exact number of brass players would be adapted according to repertoire requirements. Ideally, the concertmaster of the orchestra should be a professional from the local symphony orchestra, a practice strongly recommended by Jorma Panula of the Sibelius Academy.²² This then gives the orchestra a leader who knows how to follow and respond to a conductor, and someone who can also give the student conductors valuable feedback. Additionally, it is likely that the students playing in the orchestra would raise their own standard of playing in the presence of such an individual. Therefore, the extra money required to pay for a professional's services could be considered money well spent.

On the basis that players of the orchestra would be paid an honorarium of US\$65 per week, the program outlined above would cost somewhere in the vicinity of US\$40,000 per annum, in terms of providing musicians for the class.²³ This includes payments made to the professional pianists and concertmaster, with some extra money budgeted for occasional extra brass. Naturally, the exact figure paid to orchestra members could be modified in either

²¹ Four first violins, three second violins, three violas, two celli and one double bass player.

²² Jorma Panula, interview by author, Helsinki, 19 October, 2011.

²³ Based on the following figures: 25 players @ \$65 = \$1625 per week. 10 weeks per semester = 16,250 = \$32,500 per year for orchestra (plus budget for extra brass at \$1200). Pianos @ \$250 a call = \$5,000.

direction. However, should the figure drop too low, the standard of players wishing to participate may drop, particularly in the strings, whose services are often in high demand in a Conservatory setting. The amount of orchestra time scheduled is based on having eight students, the schedule giving each student thirty minutes of podium time per week, plus time with pianos and small ensemble. This is consistent with best international practice as found in this study. A program with fewer students would require proportionally less orchestra time.

Based on the assumption that there are fourteen teaching weeks per semester at the school this course would be presented, four weeks would be left over where no orchestra or ensemble sessions took place. In place of these practical sessions, it is proposed that the conductors participate in a series of seminars for these four weeks, led by the conducting professor. A key emphasis in these sessions would be issues such as psychology and leadership skills, as well as broader issues of body movement, as outlined Section 3.2. External experts in these areas would be invited to come and work with the students in a classroom setting discussing these subjects from a theoretical viewpoint. The same experts would then be invited to return for an orchestral session, with the focus of the video review session for that particular week lying on those areas. Other possible activities during these non-orchestral weeks could include visiting the rehearsals of a professional orchestra as a class, or discussing issues such as programming, the responsibilities of a Music Director, career issues, fundraising, approaches to auditions and competitions, early music performance practice or problems relating to score study. These weeks would also be an excellent opportunity for one to one lessons, where required.

As part of their studies, students should act as assistant conductors within the school where appropriate. Each school symphony concert could have a designated assistant to take sectional rehearsals and assist the conductor as required. More experienced students could be of great use to the school's opera department, conducting production rehearsals, and if possible, leading a performance themselves, as is the practice at the University of Michigan.

- **Repertoire**

Like all schools investigated in this study (with the exception of St. Petersburg), repertoire would be set at the beginning of each semester, and all students would study the same repertoire at the same time, regardless of level. As discussed earlier, in some ways this is not pedagogically ideal, as beginning students may find themselves conducting challenging repertoire at an early stage. However, when working with a student-based orchestra who may not be fully familiar with a broad repertoire, it is logical to work on a focused selection every week, perhaps a symphony or similar scale work, plus one shorter work, such as an overture, or a movement from a concerto. This also means that students can learn from watching each other critically, and give each other informed feedback, having studied the works themselves.

- **Supporting subjects**

The exact number of supporting subjects studied by students would vary according to which degree they were working towards. Bachelor of Music students would have two principal studies in conducting and their primary instrument, and simply take the normal subjects required by the institution for the Bachelor degree. Table 11 presents a possible curriculum for this degree. Of course, the details of supporting subjects offered may vary significantly from school to school.

Table 11. Bachelor of Music curriculum for proposed conducting program.

Year	1		2		3		Total
Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Core Studies							
Instrumental studies (or Voice)	5	5	5	5	6	6	32
Conducting	5	5	5	5	6	6	32
General Music Studies							
Music history	2	2	2	2			8
Harmony, analysis and form	2	2	2				6
Ear training	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
General music theory				2	2	2	6
Practical Music Studies							
Choir	1	1					2
Orchestra	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Chamber Music			1	1	1	1	4
Total	18	18	18	18	18	18	112

Source: Author.

Masters students would be required to study music theory and analysis, orchestration, and score reading. The conducting department would work to ensure that the teachers leading these subjects are aware of the repertoire being studied in the conducting class, and encourage the teachers to overlap as much as possible. Thus, students would have the opportunity to engage with repertoire they are studying from different viewpoints, and gain useful tools that are directly applicable to their score study process. The study of aural skills would also be required, with students enrolling in a course aimed specifically at conductors, which might also be offered to composition students. This is the practice adopted at the schools investigated in Vienna and Zürich. As is the case in Vienna, the coursework should not only be piano based, but also use examples and exercises from the orchestral literature.

Should it not be possible to achieve this within the existing structures at a particular school, the conducting professor could lead these aural development sessions, should time permit. For weeks when the class is not working with the orchestra, students would attend a conducting seminar, and visit rehearsals as a group, receiving credits for both these activities.

As proposed by Mark Stringer in Section 3.1, Masters students would also be required to enrol in the school's chamber music program. The simplest way to achieve this would be for them to enrol in the school's regular chamber music program. Alternatively, conducting students could form groups amongst themselves, but it could be seen as being in the students' best interests to work with regular instrumentalists who they may not engage with otherwise. Table 12 outlines a curriculum for the proposed Masters degree.

Table 12. Master of Music curriculum for proposed conducting program.

Year	1		2		Total
Semester	1	2	3	4	
Core Subjects					
Conducting	9	9	9	9	36
Conducting seminar	1	1	1	1	4
Final recital				3	3
Supporting Subjects					
Piano/Score reading	2	2	2	2	8
Aural skills	2	2	2	2	8
Music theory and analysis	2	2	2		6
Chamber Music	1	1	1		3
Rehearsal visits	1	1	1	1	4
Total	18	18	18	18	72

Source: Author.

DMA students would not work to a points system, hence no table has been presented for this level. DMA students would be required to study aural skills for two years, in the same class as the Masters students, and score reading for one year. Studies such as music history and theory would not be required, but could be taken where necessary, particularly if specific gaps in knowledge have been identified during the audition process. Chamber music would not be considered a requirement, but would be actively encouraged. Three recitals would be presented during the course of studies, with detailed, academic, program notes accompanying each recital.

- **Graduation**

The ideal solution for the students' final graduation recitals is to follow the Scandinavian model, and give them the opportunity to lead a concert with a professional orchestra. This is the practice in Finland, as discussed in Section 2.1, and is a common occurrence in other parts of Scandinavia. Often, one or two graduating instrumentalists may be given an opportunity to play a solo work in the same performance, thus serving as an examination for a number of students. The concert may be a full, conventional evening concert, or may take the form of a shorter lunch hour presentation. Such a practice makes sense and may be practicable if the Conservatory in question has meaningful ties with its local symphony orchestra. As well as providing students with a group of players with whom they can demonstrate their full potential, the concert, if successful, may lead to further professional engagements, both with the orchestra in question, and other music organisations in the area. The school would ideally invite representatives of local orchestras and opera companies to these recitals, perhaps even involving them in the assessment process. Thus, the student has a potential springboard into the profession. Both schools offering DMAs investigated in this study require three examination recitals prior to graduation. Providing three recitals with a professional orchestra would most likely be impractical. It is therefore suggested that one recital be presented with an orchestra or ensemble that the students

organise themselves (as occurs at Peabody and Michigan), one recital be given with a school orchestra or ensemble, and the final recital be presented with a professional orchestra. It may also be possible for an opera performance to act as one of the final recitals. Bachelor level students would be subject to an in-house examination rather than a public concert, as is the practice in Zürich.

- **Links within the community**

A conducting program requires a great deal of resources at its disposal in order to be successful. Even at the world's leading schools, a student may receive only thirty minutes per week standing in front of an orchestra. Fostering strong connections with local music organisations therefore makes sense on a number of levels. At the most basic level, access to observe rehearsals of the local symphony orchestra can be of enormous benefit to students, and costs nothing. As has been identified in Section 1.7, learning to rehearse effectively is a significant challenge for the young conductor, thus observing the rehearsals of experienced professionals is of great importance. As well as observing the conductor at work, students can develop their knowledge of the practices of professional orchestras – how they work, how they behave, and how they sound at different stages of the rehearsal process. Taking this access one step further would involve giving students the opportunity to meet guest conductors and discuss their work, much as Juilliard does with the New York Philharmonic. If the Music Director of the orchestra can be persuaded to take an interest in the welfare of the students (as is the case in Baltimore), then this would be the ideal situation. Guest conductors and in particular the Music Director could then be invited to guest teach as part of the program. Should such a relationship be developed, having students do their final recitals with the orchestra may become a strong possibility, even in countries where this is not considered standard practice. However, a strong bond of trust

must first be forged between the two organisations.²⁴ The possibility of similar relationships could also be sought with opera and ballet companies in the immediate area. Conducting students who have high-level keyboard skills in particular, could be of practical use to these organisations. Local amateur orchestras and youth orchestras should also not be overlooked. In Zürich, the conducting program benefits from links with a wider variety of orchestras, including some that are non-professional. Provided a certain technical capacity is present, such orchestras can still provide young conductors with valuable experience.

Should the above proposed course be adopted, the chances of success should be high. Of course, such a course may take some time to establish a reputation, and in so doing, attract the best students. It is worth noting that among the schools investigated in this study, the youngest is fourteen years old at the time of writing. This demonstrates that time, as well as resources, is necessary to build a successful program.

²⁴ The exact nature of the relationship will also depend on the level of the orchestra. The New York Philharmonic, for example, does not offer Juilliard students opportunities in concert, despite their close ties.

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the methods and approaches of some of the world's leading tertiary conducting schools in order to better understand the reasons for their success. By doing so, a clear picture of what constitutes current international best practice in orchestral conductor training has emerged. Potential new directions in conducting pedagogy requiring additional focus have been identified, and an ideal curriculum has been proposed, based on the research presented.

The thesis has been based on new source material generated through interviews with leading conducting pedagogues, conducted by the author in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Finland, Austria, Russia and Australia. Combined with the fact that no study of this nature has been undertaken previously, the study can be considered an original and significant contribution to the discipline.

Part One identified specific challenges facing schools delivering advanced conducting programs, and presented the thoughts of leading conducting pedagogues regarding potential solutions. Topics discussed included whether to offer programs at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, what teachers look for in the audition, how best to provide conductors an instrument to work with, pedagogical approaches to the physical aspect of conducting, approaches to score study, the role of the video camera, and the challenge of teaching conductors to rehearse. Part One allowed for a broad discussion of these issues, and encompassed key viewpoints and philosophies of the principal conducting pedagogues interviewed for the study. On many issues it was demonstrated that there is a significant diversity of opinions, with the use of the video-camera as a pedagogical tool being particularly controversial.

Part Two then presented case studies of the seven schools selected for investigation: the Sibelius Academy of Music, Helsinki, the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory of Music, the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, the University of Arts, Zürich, the Juilliard School, the Peabody Conservatory and the University of

Michigan. The emphasis in Part Two was placed on structures, audition processes, curricula, methods of delivery, and where appropriate, the imprint of key personalities. In so doing, a detailed description was given of the learning environment each school provides to their conducting students. It has been clear throughout the research process that schools are aware only in vague terms of what practices are adopted elsewhere. It is hoped, therefore, that the gathering of this information in one document will be of significant interest to a broad section of those involved in the field of tertiary orchestral conductor training.

Following these case studies, the following findings of what constitutes current international best practice in tertiary level orchestral conductor training were presented and discussed:

1. Leading institutions provide students with an orchestra to work with in addition to a preparatory ensemble.
2. A thorough and rigorous entrance examination is required in order to select the students best suited to the program.
3. Teaching is given in groups so as to maximise the learning experience and the resources provided.
4. Leading schools have a high degree of continuity in their conducting faculty.
5. The conducting program is in most cases the primary focus of the conducting professor.
6. A class size of between seven and twelve is generally considered to be standard for a one-teacher system.
7. An overall period of five years of studies is generally considered to be appropriate.
8. The broader curriculum should support the activities of the conducting class, and be as integrated as possible.
9. Strong links should be developed with the local musical community, with final examinations ideally being presented with an external professional ensemble.

Of key importance in the findings is the practice of providing students with an orchestra to work with. All institutions investigated managed to achieve this, though there was a significant variation in the method of delivery amongst the schools. The St. Petersburg Conservatory has a resident professional orchestra for this purpose, whilst the Zürich University of Arts visits various professional orchestras on a regular basis. However, the most common approach found was to pay current and/or former instrumental students an honorarium to play in the conductors' orchestra. Regardless of the approach taken, time with this valuable resource remains relatively scarce. Therefore, all schools investigated chose to work with some form of preparatory ensemble, in order to deal with preliminary issues before working with the orchestra.

Areas requiring further investigation and understanding were then examined, with the areas of physiology and psychology being identified as areas that are currently misunderstood or neglected by the field in general. It was argued that recent discoveries in the disciplines of biomechanics and the behavioural sciences may be able to shed further light on these areas, and that this is a direction that conducting pedagogy should actively pursue. There is much potential for further research in both of these areas, and it could be argued that the conducting classroom is an ideal laboratory for exploring issues such as leadership, charisma, and group psychology. Such research could be of relevance to a broad range of disciplines.

A proposed curriculum for a tertiary level orchestral conducting program was then presented. This curriculum was based on all findings presented thus far in the thesis, and represents a synthesis of best practices from around the world. A music school offering a program based on this curriculum should have a high chance of success.

- **General reflections**

As demonstrated by the contrasting quotes of Hermann Scherchen and Otto Klemperer at the beginning of this thesis, the question of whether conducting can be taught has long been

controversial. In the early years of the twentieth century this question was ordinarily answered in the negative. According to Scherchen, the consensus of opinion was that conducting could only be learnt 'by acquiring routine' in the profession.²⁵ However, the findings of this thesis have demonstrated that leading conducting schools have found a way to bring the orchestra into the conducting classroom. In this way, students are able to 'acquire routine' in a controlled educational environment. This has been the primary factor that has allowed advanced tertiary conductor training to flourish in recent decades. The technique of conducting can now be addressed with the student interacting with their instrument – the orchestra.

The present study confirms that many of the skills a conductor requires can be taught in the context of a tertiary institution. A brief examination of the curricula of schools such as the Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg State Conservatory, or the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts, demonstrates that a wide number of supporting subjects considered necessary for an orchestral conductor can be taught in a tertiary setting. Areas such as music theory, history, aural training and score reading are an essential part of a conductor's background knowledge, and have been taught successfully for many years. Indeed, a university is the only setting where these skills can be developed intensively on a regular, weekly basis. When combined with the presence of an orchestra, a rich and stimulating learning environment can be provided to the student. Indeed, from the student's perspective the question really is, not one of can conducting be taught, but can conducting be learnt. It is clear that the tertiary music school can supply an abundance of opportunities for learning and self-development.

Yet, there remain some areas where it is questioned whether or not a student of conducting can be educated. This is the area where the human interaction between the conductor and orchestra comes in to play, and is an area that sometimes defies analysis. Unlike an instrumentalist, the conductor cannot function without the acquiescence of other human beings, and issues such as leadership and charisma quickly come into play.

²⁵ Hermann Scherchen, *Lehrbuch des Dirigierens* (Mainz: Schott, 1929), 3.

However, with an orchestra present in the classroom, we effectively have a laboratory setting where these interactions can be observed. In order to deal with this issue of how a conductor engages the orchestral musicians, there is a strong argument that we should aim to make the roles of all involved as close to a professional situation as possible. In particular, students should be encouraged to rehearse the orchestra, as if working towards a hypothetical performance, and play the role of leader. Perhaps due to time and cost constraints, this is something that does not happen enough, even amongst the world's leading schools, with several teachers interviewed for this thesis acknowledging that genuine opportunities to rehearse are lacking. If students can be provided with such a rehearsal environment at least on occasion, and these rehearsals are then analysed, it follows that they will be better equipped to deal with the interpersonal aspects of conducting. As well as developing the multitude of skills discussed in this study, students must also learn how better to engage, inspire and lead the people with whom they are working.

In closing, while at the beginning of the twentieth century most would have concluded that conducting cannot be taught, today we can give a response that is largely in the affirmative, and can reasonably expect that our understanding of this complex art form will continue to develop in the future. There is no doubt that a student's conducting can be improved through tuition at the tertiary level, and it therefore cannot be considered a futile pursuit. The challenge then is really one of how we can continue to develop the field of conducting pedagogy, and come to a more complete understanding of the art form itself. If students have a passion for music, and have the requisite resources put at their disposal, then we can say with confidence that conducting can be taught.

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Appendix – List of Interviews

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Ackermann, Bronwen. Physiotherapist. Sydney, 27 December 2012.

Almila, Atso. Former Assistant Professor of conducting, Sibelius Academy. Helsinki, 21 October 2011.

Braithwaite, Nicholas. Conductor and teacher. Adelaide, 15 April 2011.

Carewe, John. Conductor and teacher. Former teacher of Simon Rattle. London, 21 September 2011.

Fredman, Myer. Conductor and teacher. Hobart, 27 October 2011.

Hopkins, John. Conductor and teacher. Melbourne, 12 March 2011.

Kiesler, Kenneth. Professor of conducting, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, 17 January 2012.

Koehler, Lutz. Professor of conducting, University of Arts, Berlin. Berlin, 28 February 2011.

Korchmar, Leonid. Professor of Conducting, Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

Lajovic, Uroš. Professor of conducting, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. Telephone interview, 6 December 2012.

Pallo, Imre. Former professor of conducting, Bloomington School of Music, Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Sydney, 7 July 2011.

Panula, Jorma. Professor of conducting, Sibelius Academy of Music. Helsinki, 3 November 2012.

Polishchuck, Alexander. Professor of conducting, Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. St. Petersburg, 25 October 2011.

Poutanen, Juhani. Director of conducting studies, Sibelius Academy of Music. Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

Rachleff, Larry. Walter Kris Hubert Professor of Music, Rice University. Telephone interview, 19 January 2012.

Ross, James. Associate Director, Juilliard School conducting program. New York, 20 January 2012.

Schlaefli, Johannes. Professor of conducting, University of Arts, Zürich. Helsinki, 1 October 2011.

Seaman, Christopher. Artistic Director, Symphony Australia conductor development program. Hobart, 10 February 2012.

Segerstam, Leif. Professor of conducting, Sibelius Academy of Music. Helsinki, 30 September 2011.

Stringer, Mark. Professor of conducting, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna. Vienna, 18 October 2011.

Thakar, Markand. Co-director of the Graduate Conducting Program, Peabody Conservatory. Baltimore, 26 January 2012.